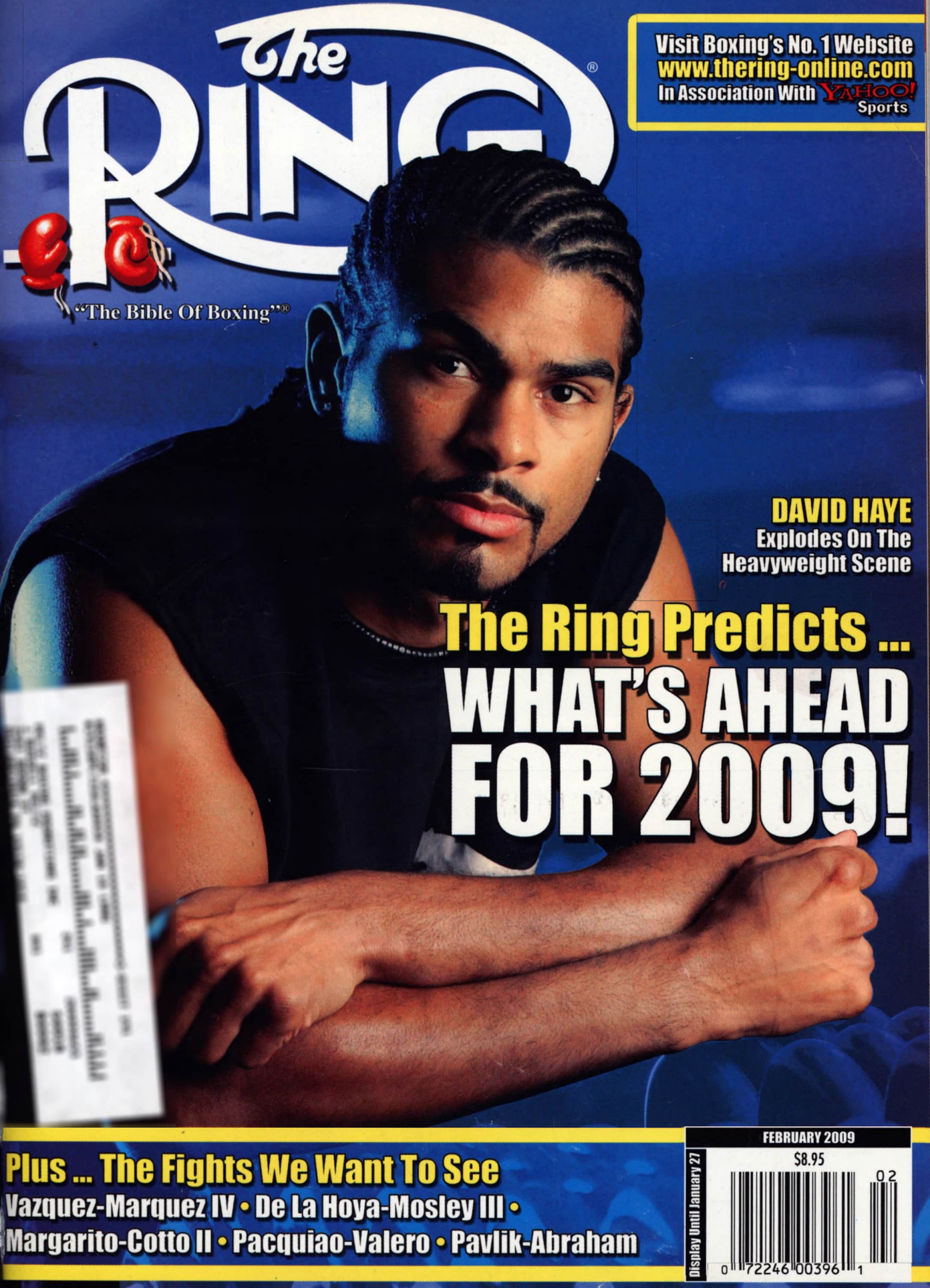
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Volume 88, No. 2 February 2009

The RING

The Message Remains The Same

I don't know for sure what Nat Fleischer would have thought about THE RING's new website, but I'm positive he would have been enthusiastic, brimming with ideas for exciting new ways to spread the gospel. I know I am.

The re-launch of thering-online.com, in partnership with Yahoo Sports, has given the "Bible Of Boxing" a state-of-the-art, cutting-edge platform from which to serve the sport—a way to reach out to millions of more people than ever before in the history of the 87-year-old publication.

Virtually overnight, the site has been transformed from a bottle rocket to an intergalactic spaceship—and you're all invited along for the ride. But hang on tight; we haven't even shifted into warp speed yet. The ongoing process of improving and updating the site stretches indefinitely into the digital future and beyond.

Yes, the best is yet to come, but technological innovation is nothing new. Back in the 1800s, the graphite pencil was as enthusiastically embraced as the laptop is today, especially by Pierce Egan and the other pioneers of boxing journalism who had previously attempted to cover fights held in a remote pasture with a quill and inkwell, often during a driving rain storm.

Next came the telegraph, a seemingly miraculous leap forward at the time. A professional stenographer using a pencil could write approximately 30 words a minute, while a telegraph operator, using Morse code, could tap out around 130. No wonder crowds used to gather outside telegraph offices to follow blow-by-blow accounts of major matches coming over the wire. Sometimes they even had puppets acting out the drama. Back then, it must have seemed as extraordinary as radio and television would in the next century.

I'm old enough to have survived the typewriter epoch, and can still recall the dozens of half-used bottles of Wite-Out that used to litter my desk. Some of my early heroes were old-time newspapermen, fedora-topped dinosaurs who pounded out ringside copy on manual Underwoods, cigarettes dangling from their mouths. But as much as I learned from and admired that whiskey-fueled breed, nobody was happier than me when some merciful angel invented spell-check software.

Still, it was with no small measure of trepidation that I entered the brave new world of word-processing. Nonetheless, inside of a month, I couldn't figure out how I ever put out a magazine without a computer. Such is the march of scientific progress—the marvel soon becomes mundane, and the world moves on.

Today, cyberspace has replaced newspapers as the main source of day-to-day boxing coverage. And although the Internet is infested with more junk than journalism, it is also now the place to find the same sort of accurate, insightful, and literate boxing coverage that has been the hallmark of THE RING since 1922.

You will see many of the same names on thering-online.com as you've been reading for years in THE RING. I'm also pleased to welcome two newcomers to the team, Michael Rosenthal and Doug Fischer, a worthy pair of additions to the finest lineup of boxing writers ever assembled.

THE RING's goal, besides providing the ultimate in boxing coverage, is to achieve total philosophical symmetry between magazine and website. That means THE RING's campaign to restore credibility to championship boxing, through THE RING Ratings and Championship Policy, can be vigorously waged on two fronts. Because it doesn't matter whether it's a pencil, telegraph, typewriter, or a computer, fundamentally, the message will always be more important than the medium.

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Opening Shot

If You Thought His Hands Were Fast ...

Prior to his fight with Paulie Malignaggi, Ricky Hatton gives a demonstration of his quick hands, but what nobody realized until they saw his 11th-round TKO in defense of The Ring *junior welterweight title was that Hatton had been working on his speed of foot with his new trainer, Floyd Mayweather Sr. "Happy Feet" Hatton has his confidence back and looks forward to some big-money fights in '09.*

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

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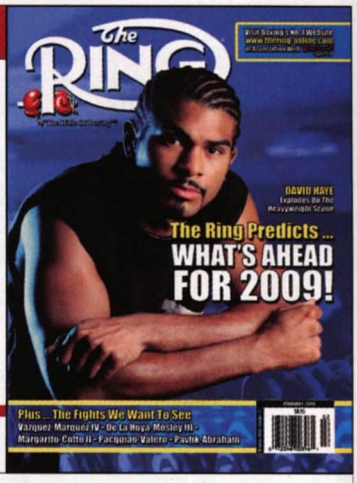

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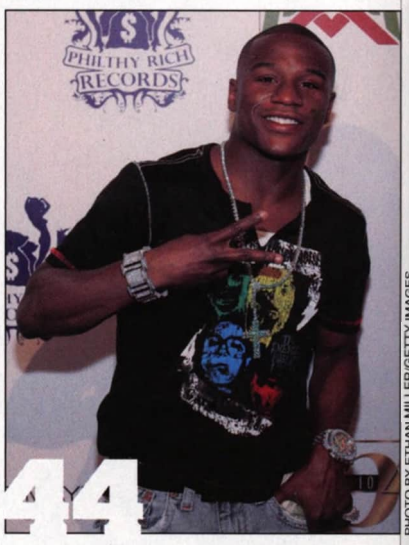

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Boxing's Economic Stimulus?

It's not easy to spin the current economic crisis into a positive development. Retirement portfolios are tanking, the unemployment rate is rising, and the government is going deeper into debt. It's a scary time, and the disappointing buy rates for a pair of fall pay-per-views, Joe Calzaghe vs. Roy Jones and Bernard Hopkins vs. Kelly Pavlik, have shown us that the fight game most definitely is being affected.

But, like Liv Tyler being the product of Steven Tyler's DNA, sometimes very good things can grow out of very bad things. So here are five ways in which the tanking economy could be a positive for boxing fans in the long run.

1. Fewer mediocre fights on pay-per-view

Hopkins-Pavlik and Calzaghe-Jones were both flawed matchups that never really belonged on PPV. Promoters have come to believe they can throw any old meeting of semi-mainstream fighters on pay-per-view and rake in the money, but in this economy, the standard has to go up. Too much product on PPV for the last two decades has pushed boxing to the fringes. More of these fights landing on HBO or Showtime will make it less expensive to be a fight fan and will translate into more eyeballs for the sport.

2. Lower pay-per-view prices

The cost of these PPVs has been rising and rising, and now top-of-line matchups that used to run you $40 are more like $55 or $60. There's no guarantee that promoters, networks, and cable providers will see dropping prices as the answer, but we can hope. At the very least, the PPV price inflation will cool off and level out.

3. HBO spending its budget more wisely

The brass at HBO Sports has taken heat in recent years for overspending on the wrong fights. They've gotten away with it so far; the budget will not be slashed for '09, but it could be slashed the following year if ratings don't improve and the economy keeps sliding. This economic crisis could serve as a wake-up call that handing out dates without both the A-side and the B-side (or, ideally, two A-sides) in place must stop.

4. More real fans at the major fights

Is there anything more depressing than all the empty seats at ringside during the PPV prelims? That happens because the tickets go to high rollers who don't care about the undercard. But the prices are already coming down, and that means the common fan can more readily get in. The result: a more invigorating atmosphere throughout a fight card.

5. Top fighters getting busier

Most superstars fight twice a year nowadays, if that. But if their paychecks are getting cut, the best way to make up for it is by competing an extra time or two. It's just plain wrong that Antonio Margarito and Miguel Cotto, two stars in their primes, were both inactive for the rest of '08 after fighting in July. Three fights per year from young gladiators like them shouldn't be too much to ask.

—Eric Raskin

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Top fighters such as Cotto and Margarito should fight more than twice a year

Genaro Hernandez Battling Cancer

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN

Hernandez en route to 12-round decision over Carlos Gerena in 1998

Ask anyone in the Southern California boxing community to name the nicest people in the business and Genaro Hernandez makes the short list.

That's one reason it was so painful to hear that the former junior lightweight titleholder is battling Rhabdomyosarcoma, a rare form of aggressive cancer that normally affects children and young adults.

Although Hernandez, 42, could lose his right eye, the cure rate is 70-80 percent, according to the Mayo Clinic's website.

Hernandez, a dominating 130-pounder in the 1990s, noticed lumps on his neck and inside his nose early last month and had it checked out. He was told by doctors he had cancer and that a tumor was eroding his eye socket.

He was to begin radiation and chemotherapy treatment on December 2 and was scheduled to continue five days a week for six weeks. Surgery could follow.

The good news, Hernandez was told, is that none of his major organs has been affected.

"The possibility of losing my eye hit me real hard," said Hernandez, who has a wife and two children. "That's something no one expects to hear. And it's still a possibility. I have to be tough, though, for my wife. She's losing weight, not sleeping well. It's taking a toll.

"I just tell her, 'Don't worry. I'm going to get through this. You have to be as strong as I am.' Of course I'm scared. I have two kids who need their dad. I'll do whatever it takes to prevent this from defeating me."

Rudy Hernandez, his older brother and trainer for most of his career, said he was stunned by the news initially but also decided it was important to be strong.

"At first, I had to take everything in," said the elder Hernandez, whose brother broke the news to him over the phone. "Then, 20 minutes later, I called him back and said, 'Hey, the doctors never said you have six months or a year or two years.' So I felt there was a lot of hope. I still do.

"I told him that this is the cards he was dealt. He's just gotta fight this, to move ahead."

To make matters worse, Hernandez relies on his wife's health insurance—she's a sales representative for a cosmetics firm—and doesn't believe it will cover his treatment.

And that's only the latest in a series of bad luck for Hernandez in recent years. He lost most of his savings as a result of bad investments in the 1990s. His mother died in 2004 of an aneurism. Less than a year later, his home in Mission Viejo was damaged by a landslide. And, more recently, he had gone into broadcasting but has had trouble finding work.

"And now I have cancer," he said. "What's going on? I don't know. You tell me. I'll just do what I have to do to beat this."

World Boxing Cares, a charitable organization affiliated with the World Boxing Council, has established a fund to help Hernandez. Tax-deductible donations may be sent to Genaro Hernandez, World Boxing Cares, 36 West 22nd St., New York, NY, 10010. The tax ID number is 26 2665978.

World Boxing Cares organizes visits by boxers to children's hospitals. Ironically, Hernandez was one of the first to visit a hospital in the program.

"That's why we're doing this," said director Jill Diamond, referring to the fund.

Said Hernandez: "I remember, we (along with Erik Morales) went to Children's Hospital in Los Angeles. I felt so bad for the kids, going through what they had to go through. I bought as many I could video games. It touched me that it meant so much to them to have someone visit them like that.

"I don't know. Maybe I was meant to go through this too."

Hernandez, 38-2-1 (17), won the WBA super featherweight title in 1991 and successfully defended it eight times. He took the WBC version of the title from the great Azumah Nelson in 1997, successfully defended it three times, and then lost it to Floyd Mayweather in 1998. That was his last fight.

—Mike Rosenthal

TV Fights of the Month

Compiled By Martin Mulcahey

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
10/23/08	Maxim Vlasov W 8 Don Mouton *Russian youngster shows maturity battling through cut eye*	Versus	sm	C	C+	C+
10/23/08	Cristobal Cruz W 12 Orlando Salido *Cruz turns pro at 14, wins a belt 17 years later*	Versus	f	B-	B	C+
10/24/08	Saul Alvarez W 10 Larry Mosley *Will Alvarez tell grandkids he beat "A" Mosley or "The" Mosley?*	Telefutura	w	B-	C+	C+
10/24/08	Antonio Escalante KO 3 Mike Oliver *Oliver's punch resistance downgraded from questionable to poor*	Telefutura	jf	B-	B	B
10/24/08	Ronald Hearns KO 6 Paul Clavette *Clavette was more defensive than Fort Knox*	Showtime	jm	C+	C	C
10/24/08	Lucian Bute W 12 Librado Andrade *Bute-ful boxing exhibition overshadowed by controversial 12th round*	Showtime	sm	B+	A-	B
10/31/08	Miguel Garcia W 10 Walter Estrada *Strong rally after knockdown saves Garcia's undefeated record*	Telefutura	f	C+	C+	C+
10/31/08	Julio Diaz W 10 Fernando Trejo *No Halloween scare for Diaz*	Telefutura	l	B	C	C+
11/01/08	Lamont Peterson W 10 Lanardo Tyner *Tough Tyner never gives up in losing cause*	PPV	jw	C+	C+	C+
11/01/08	Jorge Arce KO 4 Isidro Garcia *Anybody else get the sense Arce could have scored kayo in any round?*	PPV	jm	B	C+	C+
11/01/08	Nonito Donaire KO 6 Moruti Mthalane *Seemingly bored champ switches between orthodox and southpaw*	PPV	fl	A-	B-	C+
11/01/08	Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 10 Matt Vanda *Chavez Jr. dominant in a rematch of controversial win*	PPV	jm	C+	B-	C+
11/01/08	Andre Dirrell KO 6 Victor Oganov *No middle ground, Dirrell is either all offense or all defense*	Showtime	sm	B-	C	C
11/01/08	Vic Darchinyan KO 9 Cristian Mijares *Rarely has awkwardness hidden so much skill and ring smarts*	Showtime	jb	A	A	B+
11/07/08	Mercito Gesta W 8 Cristian Favela *Muscular Gesta gets aggressive when he sees an advantage*	Telefutura	l	C	C+	C+
11/07/08	Rogers Mtagwa KO 10 Thomas Villa *Fight of the Year candidate!*	Telefutura	f	B	B+	A+
11/08/08	Arthur Abraham KO 6 Raul Marquez *German continues to make a case for himself as world's best middleweight*	PPV	m	A-	C+	B-
11/08/08	Francisco Figueroa W 8 Emanuel Augustus *Augustus loses another close one*	PPV	jw	C+	C+	C+
11/08/08	Dmitriy Salita W 12 Derrick Campos *Salita adjusts strategy to counter Campos' every move*	PPV	jw	B-	C+	C
11/08/08	Zab Judah W 10 Ernest Johnson *How could so little action produce so much blood?*	PPV	w	B-	C	C-
11/08/08	**Joe Calzaghe W 12 Roy Jones Jr.** ***Calzaghe provides treat for all the fighters Jones ever taunted***	**PPV**	**lh**	**A**	**A-**	**B**
11/13/08	Grady Brewer W 10 Cornelius Bundrage *A fight as boring as it was close*	Versus	jm	B-	C+	C-
11/13/08	Sakio Bika KO 3 Peter Manfredo *Form holds;* Contender *champ beats* Contender *runner-up*	Versus	sm	B	B	B
11/14/08	Alexis Camacho KO 2 Edvan Barros *Barros is a better complainer than fighter*	Telefutura	w	C	C+	C
11/14/08	Raul Martinez KO 1 Victor Proa *Add killer instinct to the list of Martinez' growing list of assets*	Telefutura	jb	B-	C+	B-
11/15/08	Jermain Taylor W 12 Jeff Lacy *American elimination bout in weight class dominated by Europeans*	HBO	sm	B+	B	C+

Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(RING championship fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Kevin Finnegan, 1948-2008

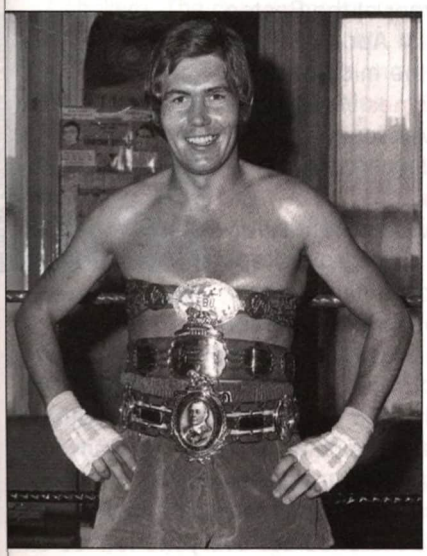
Kevin Finnegan always seemed to be on that outer rim—not exactly good enough to be a world champion, but better than most of the middleweights of his era.

He also had a way of attracting people, both in and out of the ring, and was a much-beloved figure in British boxing for a long time after he retired in 1980. It's the reason why an overflow crowd showed up to Finnegan's funeral, in Ruislip, England, after Finnegan died of heart disease at the age of 60, on October 23, 2008.

Finnegan had the heart of a lion and he was never afraid to go after the best possible opposition during a career that began in 1970 and ended in 1980. His 47-fight career produced a 35-11-1 (13) record, which included three meetings with Alan Minter, two fights against Marvelous Marvin Hagler, and an undefeated Tony Sibson.

"I can't understand it," his grieving older brother, Chris, a 1968 Olympic gold medalist, told the British *Boxing News*. "Anybody but Kevin. Kevin was the cream of boxing. He was everything I wasn't, a supreme stylist, good puncher, a chin like granite. Nobody ever stopped him, except on cuts. But I guess this is one count he couldn't beat."

It was Chris who coerced his younger brother into boxing, though Kevin publicly stated he never had a problem with following in the shadow of his brother's considerable success. The siblings would often smash each other during heated sparring sessions in South London's legendary Lavender Hill gym.



Finnegan shows off his belts in 1974

Kevin was once suspended 18 months for climbing into the ring to argue one of Chris' losses, but there was also another side to him. Throughout his boxing career, Kevin painted and often spoke of his desire to eventually become a full-time artist.

Where Chris once unsuccessfully challenged light heavyweight world champion Bob Foster in 1972 (THE RING's Fight of the Year), most of Kevin's career was fought on the fringes of the big time. He never fought for a world championship, but on three occasions he captured the British middleweight crown (between 1974 and '79), and also held the European 160-pound title.

Finnegan is best remembered by American boxing fans for gallant back-to-back losses to a budding middleweight from Brockton, Massachusetts, named Marvin Hagler. They fought both bouts within a two-month span, with Hagler stopping Finnegan the first time in a seventh-round TKO, in March '78, and the second bout ending with a ninth-round TKO, in May '78.

Perhaps Finnegan will be best remembered by British and European fans for his three wars with Minter, who was once the middleweight world champion, before he lost it to Hagler in September 1980.

Minter walked behind the four black horses that pulled Finnegan's carriage hearse. "He became like a brother to me because we spent so much time together," said Minter during the service.

In his waning years, Finnegan took on a reclusive lifestyle in Hillingdon, Middlesex. It was neighbors who alerted local authorities when Finnegan had not been seen for a few days. "He was a better fighter than me, smoother with more skills, and," said Chris, "a nicer man."

—Joseph Santoliquito

Outside the Ropes

PHOTO BY WILL HART

Calzaghe: More honors

The accolades keep coming for **Joe Calzaghe**. On November 26, the undefeated light heavyweight champion received a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) from **Queen Elizabeth II**. The honor was for service to sport and voluntary services in Wales. Earlier in the month, Calzaghe received the Boxer of the Year Award from the **British Boxing Board of Control** ... Despite a weakening economy, the **Nevada State Athletic Commission** reported that boxing generated $3.6-million in tax revenue for the state between November 2007 and October 2008 ... The **U.S. Olympic Committee** has ended the probation it placed on **USA Boxing** in 2002, citing progress made in reforming the organization that develops boxers to compete in the Olympics. The probation was imposed because of a variety of problems in managing the amateur program ... IBF flyweight titleholder **Nonito Donaire** has confirmed that is father, **Nonito Donaire Sr.**, will no longer be his trainer. The split came when Donaire Sr. publicly denounced his son's wife, Rachael. "I can't work with him anymore," Donaire Jr. told **Joaquin Henson** of the *Philippine Star*. "He is my father and I respect him, but he should respect me too. He shouldn't try to turn the world against his own son by badmouthing me and my wife" ... Former WBO middleweight and super middleweight titleholder **Steve Collins**, 44, pleaded not guilty to assault charges, stemming from an incident that took place in June 2006. Collins' counsel told Dublin's Circuit Criminal Court that the ex-boxer acted in self-defense when he punched doorman **Addrialik Voda**, 37, at the National Boxing Stadium in Dublin ... Thieves broke into Toledo, Ohio's **Glass City Boxing** gym in mid-November and stole the ring that has been used since the 1970s. Trainer **Tom Urbiba** said if the ring is not returned the gym will have to cancel upcoming boxing shows ... British Olympic boxer **Bradley Sanders**, 22, was arrested and questioned on suspicion of dealing cocaine. A drug-sniffing dog reportedly found 300 grams of white powder in Sanders' back garden after a warrant had been issued to search the property in County Durham. "They told me they'd had an anonymous telephone call tip-off," said Sanders. "There was never anything in that garden. I know nothing about any drugs" ... Middleweight **Jonathan Taylor**, 28, was hospitalized after collapsing in the ring during the sixth and final round of a November 20 bout with **Anthony Bartinelli** at the Celebrity Theater in Phoenix, Arizona. One minute into the sixth round of a fight Taylor seemed to be winning, his hands suddenly dropped to his side and then he collapsed. According to Taylor's mother, **Georgeannie Figueroa**, her son suffered a brain hemorrhage that led to a stroke. "He had taken a few blows but nothing hard enough for this to happen," said Figueroa. "It was probably old injuries that Jonathan had already." If that were the case, a prefight MRI could have detected the injury, but Arizona does not require mandatory MRIs prior to fights ... Former South African junior featherweight titleholder **Gaybon Yekiso**, 52, died of a stomach disorder. Yekiso compiled a 27-8-3 (12) record in a pro career that began in 1978 and ended in '87 ... Plymouth, Massachusetts, trainer **Charles "Babe" Wood**, 93, died of pneumonia on November 2. Wood, described by *The Boston Globe* as "trainer and confidant for boxing champions **Rocky Marciano**, **Sonny Liston**, and **Paul Pender**," fought briefly before becoming a trainer. Wood owned the Old Mill Lounge in Plymouth for 27 years, a haven for boxing fans that housed Pender's RING magazine championship belt in a glass case over the bar. Woods was in Pender's corner at the Boston Gardens the night of April 7, 1962, when he regained the middleweight title from **Terry Downes** ... Referee **Toby Gibson**, 61, was found dead in the garage of his Las Vegas home by his wife, **Barbara Gibson**, on November 24. A victim of carbon dioxide poisoning, Gibson had apparently taken his own life. The previous Saturday, Gibson, a referee for more than two decades, had worked two preliminary bouts on the **Ricky Hatton-Paul Malignaggi** undercard at the MGM Grand. "The entire boxing community is saddened," fellow referee and close friend Jay Nady told the Las Vegas *Review-Journal*. "He was a wonderful man. He was always making people laugh, and he had a big heart. His was the shoulder everyone leaned on and laid their burdens on."

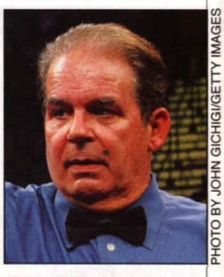


PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Gibson: Suicide victim

Quotable

"They still consider me the best heavyweight out there. I'm the last great heavyweight and obviously they want me for their own selfish reasons."

—Retired heavyweight champion Lennox Lewis, commenting on why Vitali and Wladimir Klistchko are so eager to fight him

"A true throwback and a man who has had a hand, however minor, in creating many great champions of the past and, in all likelihood, the future, deserves the utmost respect and admiration."

—Danny Flexen, writing in ***Boxing News*** *about legendary British journeyman Peter Buckley, who retired after winning the final fight of a 32-256-12 (10) career*

[Ratings Analysis]

For Period Ended November 24, 2008

Heavyweights: Alexander Dimitrenko enters at 10, replacing John Ruiz (10th last issue), who is 2-3 over his last five fights.

Cruiserweights: Jean-Marc Mormeck (third last issue) exits due to inactivity, moving everyone from four to 10 up one place each and making room for Giacobbe Fragomeni to enter at 10.

Light Heavyweights: Hugo Garay (10th last issue) switches places with Chris Henry (ninth last issue).

Super Middleweights: Jermain Taylor (10th last issue) advances to five due to his win over Jeff Lacy, who drops to 10. Sakio Bika (eighth last issue) trades with Allan Green (seventh last issue) on the strength of is TKO of Peter Manfredo.

Middleweights: Marco Antonio Rubio (ninth last issue) switches with Raul Marquez (eighth last issue), who was stopped by top-rated Arthur Abraham. James McGirt Jr. exits from 10 after a draw against journeyman Marcus Upshaw, and is replaced by Daniel Geale.

Junior Middleweights: Sergei Dzindziruk (ninth last issue) moves to seven after a decision victory over 10th-rated Joel Julio. Daniel Santos (seventh last issue) and Joachim Alcine (eighth last issue) drop one place each.

Welterweights: Andre Berto (10th last issue) switches with Isaac Hlatswayo (ninth last issue).

Junior Welterweights: World champion Ricky Hatton's TKO of Paulie Malignaggi (first last issue) sends "The Magic Man" tumbling down to four, raising everyone ranked two through four last issue one place each. Lovemore Ndou (ninth last issue) exits to fight at welterweight, enabling Marcos Maidana to debut in the ratings at nine.

Lightweights: No changes.

Junior Lightweights: Yodsanan Nanthachai (fourth last issue) exits to campaign at a higher weight, moving everyone up from five to 10 one place each. Malcolm Klassen enters at 10.

Featherweights: No changes.

Junior Featherweights: Steve Molitor (fourth last issue) plummets to seven after being stopped by third-rated Celestino Caballero. The change moves up everyone rated from fifth to seventh last issue. Rey Bautista (eighth last issue) departs after suffering an upset loss to Heriberto Ruiz, moving up Ricardo Cordoba (ninth last issue) and Jhonny Gonzalez (10th last issue) one place each. Bernabe Concepcion enters at 10.

Bantamweights: No changes.

Junior Bantamweights: Vic Darchinyan (fourth last issue) surges to number one after stopping Cristian Mijares (first last issue), who drops to three. The reshuffling drops Alexander Munoz (third last issue) to four.

Flyweights: No changes.

Junior Flyweights: No changes.

Strawweights: Nkosinathi Joyi enters at 10, replacing Daniel Reyes (10th last issue).

Pound-for-pound: A slight shakeup, as Cristian Mijares (seventh last issue) drops out after losing to Vic Darchinyan. His departure moves up Rafael Marquez (eighth last issue), Miguel Cotto (ninth last issue), and Ivan Calderon (10th last issue) one place each, while Ricky Hatton returns at 10.

The RING®
"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

Pound-For-Pound

1. **Manny Pacquiao**
   Lightweight
2. **Juan Manuel Marquez**
   Lightweight
3. **Joe Calzaghe**
   Light Heavyweight
4. **Bernard Hopkins**
   Light Heavyweight
5. **Israel Vazquez**
   Junior Featherweight
6. **Antonio Margarito**
   Welterweight
7. **Rafael Marquez**
   Junior Featherweight
8. **Miguel Cotto**
   Welterweight
9. **Ivan Calderon**
   Junior Flyweight
10. **Ricky Hatton**
    Junior Welterweight

For weekly updated Ring ratings, go to **TheRing-online.com**

[The Ring Ratings]

For Period Ended November 24, 2008

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled by winning a box-off between THE RING's number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

THE RING Ratings are compiled by the magazine's editorial board, with the participation of THE RING Ratings Panel of boxing journalists from around the world. To see the complete list of our panelists, click on "Ratings" at thering-online.com.

Records provided by boxrec.com.

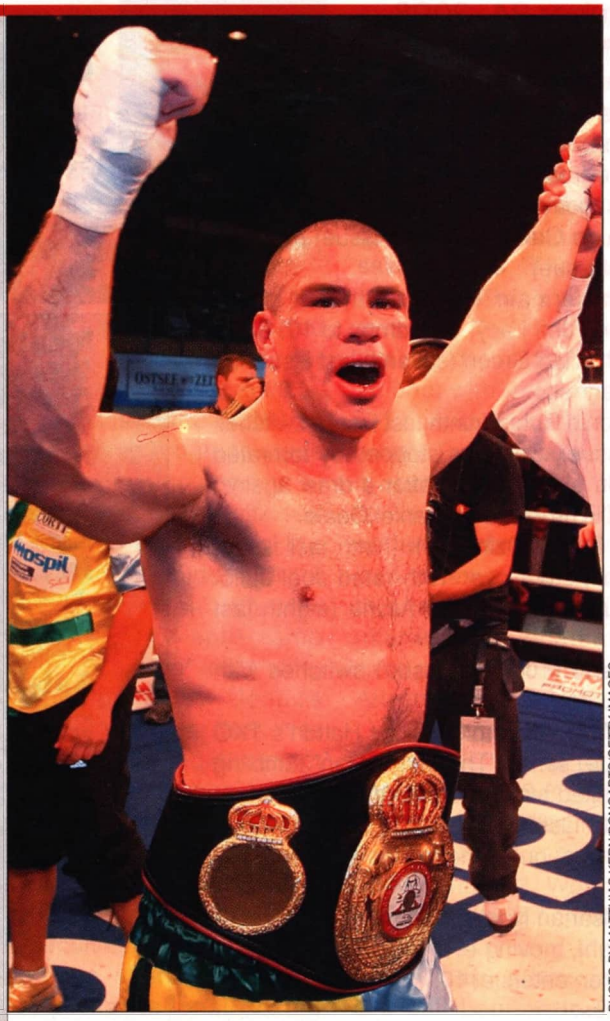


PHOTO BY MATTHIAS KERN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Light heavyweight Hugo Garay rises to nine in the ratings

Heavyweights

Weight Unlimited

Champ: Vacant

1. **WLADIMIR KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 51-3 (45)
2. **VITALI KLITSCHKO** Ukraine 36-2 (35)
3. **RUSLAN CHAGAEV** Uzbekistan 24-0-1 (17)
4. **NICOLAY VALUEV** Russia 49-1 (34)
5. **ALEXANDER POVETKIN** Russia 16-0 (12)
6. **SULTAN IBRAGIMOV** Russia 22-1-1 (17)
7. **SAMUEL PETER** Nigeria 30-2 (23)
8. **OLEG MASKAEV** Kazakhstan 35-6 (26)
9. **JUAN CARLOS GOMEZ** Cuba 44-1 (35)
10. **ALEXANDER DIMITRENKO** Ukraine 29-0 (19)

Jr. Middleweights

Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VERNON FORREST** Atlanta, GA 41-3 (29)
2. **VERNO PHILLIPS** Belize 42-10-1 (21)
3. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA** Los Angeles, CA 39-5 (30)
4. **CORY SPINKS** St. Louis, MO 36-5 (11)
5. **SERGIO MORA** Los Angeles, CA 21-1-1 (5)
6. **SERGIO MARTINEZ** Argentina 44-1-1 (24)
7. **SERGEI DZINZIRUK** Ukraine 36-0 (22)
8. **DANIEL SANTOS** Puerto Rico 32-3-1 (23)
9. **JOACHIM ALCINE** Haiti 30-1 (19)
10. **JOEL JULIO** Colombia 34-2 (31)

Featherweights

Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **CHRIS JOHN** Indonesia 42-0-1 (22)
2. **STEVEN LUEVANO** La Puente, CA 36-1-1 (15)
3. **JORGE SOLIS** Mexico 36-1-2 (26)
4. **JORGE LINARES** Venezuela 25-0 (16)
5. **HIROYUKI ENOKI** Japan 27-1-2 (19)
6. **MARIO SANTIAGO** Puerto Rico 19-1-1 (14)
7. **MARTIN HONORIO** Mexico 25-4-1 (13)
8. **OSCAR LARIOS** Mexico 63-6-1 (39)
9. **TAKAHIRO AOH** Japan 16-1-1 (8)
10. **CRISTOBAL CRUZ** Mexico 37-11-1 (23)

Jr. Featherweights

Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: ISRAEL VAZQUEZ Mexico 43-4 (31)

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ** Mexico 37-5 (33)
2. **CELESTINO CABALLERO** Panama 31-2 (22)
3. **JUAN MANUEL LOPEZ** Puerto Rico 23-0 (21)
4. **POONSAWAT KRATINGAENGGYM** Thailand 36-1 (25)
5. **SERGIO MANUEL MEDINA** Argentina 33-1 (18)
6. **DANIEL PONCE DE LEON** Mexico 35-2 (31)
7. **STEVE MOLITOR** Canada 28-1 (11)
8. **RICARDO CORDOBA** Panama 34-1-2 (21)
9. **JHONNY GONZALEZ** Mexico 40-6 (34)
10. **BERNABE CONCEPCION** Philippines 27-1-1 (16)

Bantamweights

Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **HOZUMI HASEGAWA** Japan 25-2 (9)
2. **ANSELMO MORENO** Panama 24-1-1 (8)
3. **WLADIMIR SIDORENKO** Ukraine 21-1-2 (7)
4. **SILENCE MABUZA** South Africa 22-2 (18)
5. **GERRY PENALOSA** Philippines 53-6-2 (36)
6. **JOSEPH AGBEKO** Ghana 25-1 (22)
7. **ABNER MARES** Mexico 17-0 (10)
8. **VUSI MALINGA** South Africa 18-2-1 (11)
9. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ** Panama 27-2 (20)
10. **LUIS PEREZ** Nicaragua 25-3 (16)

Cruiserweights
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **STEVE CUNNINGHAM**
   Philadelphia, PA 21-1 (11)
2. **TOMASZ ADAMEK**
   Poland 35-1 (24)
3. **KRZYSZTOF WLODARCZYK**
   Poland 41-2 (31)
4. **GUILLERMO JONES**
   Panama 36-3-2 (28)
5. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Jamaica 26-3-1 (24)
6. **FIRAT ARSLAN**
   Germany 29-4-1 (18)
7. **ENZO MACCARINELLI**
   Wales 28-2 (21)
8. **MARCO HUCK**
   Yugoslavia 23-1 (18)
9. **VADIM TOKAREV**
   Russia 25-1-1 (18)
10. **GIACOBBE FRAGOMENI**
    Italy 26-1 (10)

Light Heavyweights
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: JOE CALZAGHE
Wales 46-0 (32)

1. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Philadelphia, PA 49-5-1 (32)
2. **CHAD DAWSON**
   New Haven, CT 27-0 (17)
3. **GLEN JOHNSON**
   Jamaica 48-12-2 (33)
4. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 27-5 (19)
5. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
   Hungary 29-0 (17)
6. **ROY JONES**
   Pensacola, FL 52-5 (38)
7. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 41-4-1 (24)
8. **ADRIAN DIACONU**
   Romania 25-0 (15)
9. **HUGO GARAY**
   Argentina 32-3 (17)
10. **CHRIS HENRY**
    Houston, TX 22-1 (18)

Super Middleweights
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MIKKEL KESSLER**
   Denmark 41-1 (31)
2. **LUCIAN BUTE**
   Romania 23-0 (18)
3. **LIBRADO ANDRADE**
   Mexico 27-2 (21)
4. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 34-3 (23)
5. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AR 28-2-1 (17)
6. **CARL FROCH**
   England 23-0 (19)
7. **SAKIO BIKA**
   Cameroon 27-3-2 (17)
8. **ALLAN GREEN**
   Tulsa, OK 27-1 (19)
9. **DENIS INKIN**
   Russia 34-0 (24)
10. **JEFF LACY**
    St. Petersburg, FL 24-2 (17)

Middleweights
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: KELLY PAVLIK
Youngstown, OH 34-1 (30)

1. **ARTHUR ABRAHAM**
   Armenia 28-0 (23)
2. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 31-2-1 (13)
3. **SEBASTIAN SYLVESTER**
   Germany 29-3 (14)
4. **AMIN ASIKAINEN**
   Finland 25-1 (17)
5. **RANDY GRIFFIN**
   Louisville, KY 24-2-3 (12)
6. **DAVID LOPEZ**
   Mexico 37-12 (23)
7. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
   Spain 62-8 (43)
8. **MARCO ANTONIO RUBIO**
   Mexico 43-4-1 (37)
9. **RAUL MARQUEZ**
   Mexico 41-4-1 (29)
10. **DANIEL GEALE**
    Australia 19-0 (12)

Welterweights
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 37-5 (27)
2. **PAUL WILLIAMS**
   Augusta, GA 35-1 (26)
3. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 32-1 (26)
4. **SHANE MOSLEY**
   Pomona, CA 45-5 (38)
5. **JOSHUA CLOTTEY**
   Ghana 35-2 (20)
6. **CARLOS QUINTANA**
   Puerto Rico 26-2 (20)
7. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 37-6 (25)
8. **LUIS COLLAZO**
   Queens, NY 29-3 (14)
9. **ANDRE BERTO**
   Winter Haven, FL 23-0 (19)
10. **ISAAC HLATSWAYO**
    South Africa 28-1-1 (10)

Jr. Welterweights
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: RICKY HATTON
England 45-1 (32)

1. **TIMOTHY BRADLEY**
   Palm Springs, CA 23-0 (11)
2. **JUNIOR WITTER**
   England 37-2-2 (22)
3. **ANDREAS KOTELNIK**
   Ukraine 30-2-1 (13)
4. **PAUL MALIGNAGGI**
   Brooklyn, NY 25-2 (5)
5. **HERMAN NGOUDJO**
   Cameroon 17-2 (9)
6. **KENDALL HOLT**
   Paterson, NJ 24-2 (13)
7. **RICARDO TORRES**
   Colombia 32-2 (28)
8. **JUAN URANGO**
   Colombia 20-1-1 (16)
9. **MARCOS MAIDANA**
   Argentina 25-0 (24)
10. **JUAN LAZCANO**
    Mexico 37-5-1 (27)

Lightweights
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ
Mexico 49-4-1 (36)

1. **NATE CAMPBELL**
   Jacksonville, FL 32-5-1 (25)
2. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Philippines 47-3-2 (35)
3. **JUAN DIAZ**
   Houston, TX 34-1 (17)
4. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Cuba 36-4-1 (22)
5. **DAVID DIAZ**
   Chicago, IL 34-2-1 (17)
6. **JULIO DIAZ**
   Mexico 36-4 (26)
7. **ANTONIO PITALUA**
   Mexico 46-3 (40)
8. **MICHAEL KATSIDIS**
   Australia 23-2 (20)
9. **ALI FUNEKA**
   South Africa 30-1-2 (25)
10. **YURI ROMANOV**
    Belarus 21-2 (14)

Jr. Lightweights
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **EDWIN VALERO**
   Venezuela 24-0 (24)
2. **HUMBERTO SOTO**
   Mexico 45-7-2 (29)
3. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
   Houston, TX 28-4 (20)
4. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
   South Africa 36-3-1 (19)
5. **MZONKE FANA**
   South Africa 28-4 (11)
6. **NICKY COOK**
   England 29-1(16)
7. **JORGE BARRIOS**
   Argentina 47-4-1 (34)
8. **URBANO ANTILLON**
   Mexico 24-0 (17)
9. **ROMAN MARTINEZ**
   Puerto Rico 20-0-1 (12)
10. **MALCOLM KLASSEN**
    South Africa 23-4-2 (14)

Jr. Bantamweights
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Armenia 31-1-1 (25)
2. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 38-2-1 (28)
3. **CRISTIAN MIJARES**
   Mexico 36-4-2 (15)
4. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 32-3 (27)
5. **NOBUO NASHIRO**
   Japan 12-1 (7)
6. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 51-4-1 (39)
7. **JOSE NAVARRO**
   Los Angeles, CA 26-4 (12)
8. **Z GORRES**
   Philippines 28-2-2 (15)
9. **DIMITRI KIRILOV**
   Russia 29-4-1 (9)
10. **KOHEI KONO**
    Japan 21-4 (7)

Flyweights
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NONITO DONAIRE**
   Philippines 20-1 (13)
2. **DAISUKE NAITO**
   Japan 33-2-3 (21)
3. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 69-3-1 (37)
4. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
   Japan 33-4-2 (15)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 28-0-2 (17)
6. **DENKAOSAN KAOVICHIT**
   Thailand 45-1-1 (19)
7. **JOSE LOPEZ**
   Puerto Rico 38-7-2 (32)
8. **KOKI KAMEDA**
   Japan 19-0 (12)
9. **HUGO CAZARES**
   Mexico 26-5-1 (19)
10. **MORUTI MTHALANE**
    South Africa 22-2 (15)

Jr. Flyweights
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: IVAN CALDERON
Puerto Rico 32-0 (6)

1. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 28-1-2 (20)
2. **CESAR CANCHILA**
   Colombia 27-1 (21)
3. **GIOVANNI SEGURA**
   Mexico 19-1-1 (15)
4. **EDGAR SOSA**
   Mexico 33-5 (17)
5. **JUANITO RUBILLAR**
   Philippines 46-10-7 (22)
6. **OMAR NINO**
   Mexico 26-3-1 (11)
7. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 25-5-2 (14)
8. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
   France 23-2 (9)
9. **JUAN CARLOS REVECO**
   Argentina 18-1 (9)
10. **RAYONTA WHITFIELD**
    Augusta, GA 22-0 (11)

Strawweights
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **ROMAN GONZALEZ**
   Nicaragua 21-0 (19)
2. **RAUL GARCIA**
   Mexico 24-0-1 (15)
3. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
   Japan 23-2-3 (9)
4. **OLEYDONG SITHSAMERCHAI**
   Thailand 28-0 (12)
5. **EAGLE KYOWA**
   Thailand 18-2 (6)
6. **FLORANTE CONDES**
   Philippines 22-4-1 (20)
7. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
   Indonesia 62-6-5 (31)
8. **KATSUNARI TAKAYAMA**
   Japan 22-3 (9)
9. **DONNIE NIETES**
   Philippines 23-1-3 (14)
10. **NKOSINATHI JOYI**
    South Africa 19-0 (15)

By Jeff Ryan

A Stitch (Or Several) In Time

The crimson tide isn't just a nickname for the Alabama football team. It's also an indication to me that we're about to see a boxing legend take a pasting like he's never taken before. Rod Stewart was right: The first cut often is the deepest.

A strange sense of déjà vu came over me when the ever-busy mitts of Joe Calzaghe opened a gash over the left eye of Roy Jones during one future Hall-of-Famer's thumping of another at Madison Square Garden. When a great fighter who doesn't cut easily is busted up in a bout, it can be as unmistakable a forecast of impending doom as a funnel cloud on the horizon or an air-raid siren. It happened to Roberto Duran before Thomas Hearns knocked him on his face. It happened to Wilfred Benitez, when a clash of heads left him with a forehead gash that never stopped bleeding until Sugar Ray Leonard stopped him. And it happened to Julio Cesar Chavez before a young Oscar De La Hoya handed him his first kayo defeat in 99 fights.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Jones should see the blood as a sign

In Jones' case, the cut was merely the final lasting image of a fighter who went from unbeatable and immortal to overrated and used-up in a chunk of time that seemed to travel as fast as one of the left hooks of his prime. In one sense, it was hard to believe that the boxer who was peering through the blood, covering up feebly on the ropes, and eating combination after combination was the same artist who once threw punches behind his back, played in a minor league basketball game on the day of a title defense, beat Bernard Hopkins, and flattened a fighter the caliber of Virgil Hill with a single bodyshot.

This was a Jones, we had to remind ourselves, who once had a television analyst gushing that he might be the great-

est fighter *ever*, a Jones who responded to his first loss, by DQ to Montell Griffin, by turning his poor rival into his own personal Max Schmeling in the rematch.

It was those kinds of special moments that had too many people who know better convincing themselves that a Jones two months shy of 40 would somehow beat Calzaghe. Just as the scripts for every *Rocky* film from the third installment to the sixth conveniently forgot the supposedly career-threatening and vision-threatening eye problem the movie's hero encountered in *Rocky II*, so, too, did the Jones supporters manage to overlook their man losing three times in 17 months between 2004 and 2005, twice by brutal kayo. It's hard for the body, the psyche, or both to recover from beatings like that, no matter how much time has elapsed.

So when Jones won three decisions in a row, including one over a used-up Felix Trinidad in January, people believed. When he said he was in the best shape of his career and blamed his defeats to Antonio Tarver (twice) and Glen Johnson on having dropped back to light heavyweight too quickly after experimenting with the heavyweight ranks, people believed. Folks weren't just eager to buy a used car from Jones. They were willing to buy the whole lot.

In my eyes, Jones never seemed like a good foe for what was billed as Calzaghe's likely last bout. For starters, Jones was too ringworn to be considered an impressive last entry on the Calzaghe career resume. Second, those of us who didn't succumb to the hype knew that Jones would have problems with a high-volume attack. In his prime, Jones did so many things technically incorrect, yet his amazing hand speed, angle-punching, and head movement enabled him to dominate despite his flaws. But when his reflexes began to slow (and his confidence waned), he didn't have the technical foundation to fall back on. Jones suddenly wasn't a magician anymore. Now, he was just an old guy who backed up in a straight line and held his hands too low.

It's difficult to watch any aging legend getting slapped silly at the end, no matter how used to it we should be by now. But it's even tougher to take when a superstar who was once covered in glory ends up covered in blood. Jones wore a red mask, his supporters wore blinders, and his career has now worn out its welcome.

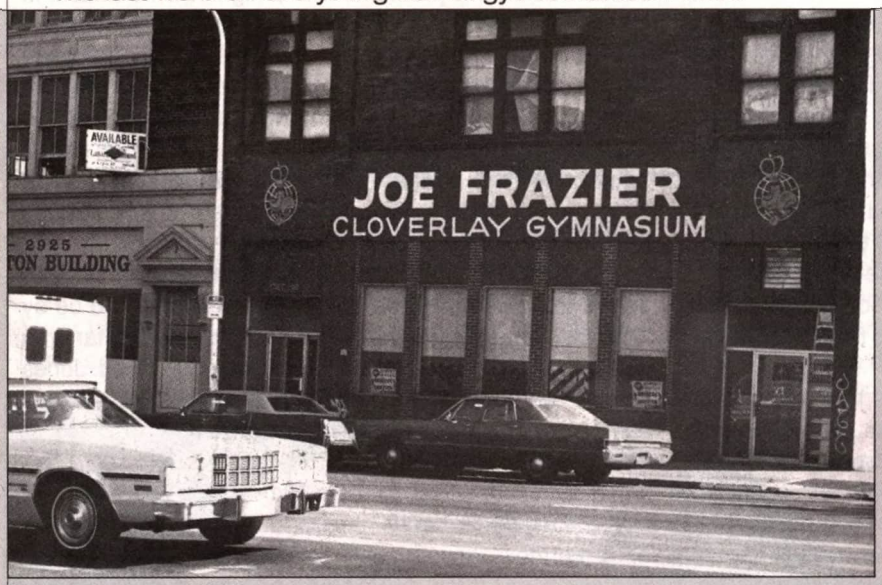
Drawing The Line: Blame it on the zillionaire with the orange comb-over. If Donald Trump would have hired Lennox Lewis on last season's installment of *The Celebrity Apprentice*, the ex-heavyweight king might be sitting in a boardroom right now and helping to give rise to The Donald's latest skyscraper. Instead, it's presumed by many that The Lennox is sitting in a room bored. And that's giving rise to whispers that a comeback could be in the great Briton's future.

PHOTO BY JEFF GROSS/GETTY IMAGES

Lewis-Klitschko II, six years later?

Personal Perceptions:

The last word on everything from a gym beau to a Kimbo



Frazier's Gym would make a splendid museum

•Joe Frazier's Gym, the fighter factory in North Philadelphia, is for sale. According to "Smokin' Joe," it simply costs too much to run the place nowadays. Excuse my hallucination, but it sure would be nice to see the city take over the building and turn it into a long overdue Philly boxing museum. What a great place to pay tribute to not just the Hall of Famers like Frazier, Joey Giardello, and Matthew Saad Muhammad, but also the Bennie Briscoes, Jimmy Youngs, and Frank "The Animal" Fletchers.

•Though Jermain Taylor looked impressive in decisioning Jeff Lacy, don't count me among those intrigued by the idea of a Taylor-Calzaghe matchup. If Taylor couldn't beat Kelly Pavlik in two tries, nothing makes me think "Bad Intentions" can defeat a guy who's better, bigger, and smarter than Pavlik.

•Though he'd compiled a record of just 6-6-2 in his previous dozen bouts and hadn't fought in over a year, 46-year-old Evander Holyfield was scheduled to challenge WBA heavyweight ruler Nicolay Valuev as we went to press. Amazingly, "The Real Deal" remains active at a time when he should be the subject of a "Where Are They Now?" feature.

•Any talk about welterweight matchups that doesn't begin with a demand for Paul Williams-Antonio Margarito II is a talk that's not worth having. Williams shouldn't be forced to chase after middleweights because Margarito wants to play it safe.

•Don't you wish HBO's *24/7* series had been around years ago? Imagine cameras following "Neon Leon" Spinks' late-night escapades in New Orleans prior to his rematch with Ali, or capturing George Foreman's moodiness and paranoia prior to his slugfest with "The Greatest" in Zaire, or witnessing Duran stoking himself for his battle with Leonard in Montreal. Just think of the soap opera life of Mike Tyson before *any* fight. HBO would have needed to rent an aircraft hangar to store all the Emmys.

•So Andrew Golota, claiming an arm injury, surrendered in his corner after one round against Ray Austin. Gee, what a shock. Golota has had far too many of these moments in his career when he's left everyone questioning his toughness. Since this one unfolded in China, don't be surprised if his detractors now label him a General Tso chicken.

•After Elite XC fighter Kimbo Slice beat up some palooka in the cage earlier this year, a few dizzy columnists suggested that Slice's style and size might serve him better as a heavyweight boxer. Well, in an October outing, Slice was diced in a mere 14 seconds, toppled by a single right hand. Lucky for him, the right hand wasn't tossed by Haye, Chris Arreola, or one of the Klitschkos, or the senses of Kimbo might still be in limbo.

PHOTO BY MATTHIAS KERN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Holyfield and Valuev to fight in Zurich

If Lewis, who exited the game following a shaky but successful defense against Vitali Klitschko in 2003, wasn't at least somewhat unfulfilled in retirement, he never would have signed up for a reality show in the first place. As is the case with most retired gladiators, rumors of a return have swirled around him from time to time during the past five years. As is *not* the case with most retired fighters, he was able to fight off whatever cravings for combat he had.

Both Calzaghe and heavyweight contender David Haye have said they hope Lewis remains in mothballs to preserve his legacy. But Lewis' former trainer, Emanuel Steward, recently said that he wouldn't mind seeing that telephone-pole jab and anvil right cross resurrected, par-

Madison Square Garden will retain classic exterior

ticularly if Lewis' motivation for returning is a rematch with Klitschko.

"I see no reason why [Lennox] couldn't get back in shape in 12 weeks," Steward told the U.K. newspaper *The Guardian*.

Lewis, who is 43, should stay retired. If he competes again, he risks his health and the reputation he's cultivated as one of the rare fighters who didn't let pride/ego/greed get in the way of good sense. And yet, if Lewis does return, you're not going to hear this happy hypocrite squawking about it the way he normally does when an old coot shakes the cobwebs from his protective cup, mixes some Red Bull with his Geritol, and drags his creaking bones back up the ring steps.

Why? Because Lewis, even if he wouldn't be returning as a heavyweight king recognized by THE RING or the alphabets, would still hold the *linear* crown. And if he were to lose that belt before walking away again, it would continue to be passed around, much to the joy of a purist like me. A lineage that began when Floyd Patterson kayoed Archie Moore in 1956 for the title that Rocky Marciano vacated, managed to be kept alive all the way until Lewis announced his farewell in 2004. Kept alive, that is, against very long odds and despite requiring some unusual circumstances, such as Muhammad Ali coming out of a two-year retirement to lose it to Larry Holmes.

The linear crown may seem meaningless to some, but it's still one of the best ways to make sense out of a fractured, fragmented, and politically turbulent heavyweight history. With so few tools at our disposal to do that kind of dirty work, we should be grateful for it.

Miracle On 33rd Street? Apparently, the inevitable march of progress isn't so inevitable after all.

Plans had called for the current Madison Square Garden, the world's greatest fight venue and the fourth building to carry the famous name, to be leveled and replaced by a new arena a block or two to the west. Garden V was to feature all of the amenities of the newest sports palaces, from luxury suites to improved sight lines. Never mind that it would have looked like 20 other NBA arenas and been as sterile as an operating room.

A lot of great boxing history would have been lying in that pile of rubble, but now fight connoisseurs don't have to shudder at the thought. Cablevision, the owner of MSG, has changed its plans and says it will now renovate the current building into a state-of-the-art arena. Construction is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2009 (though an MSG insider told me 2010 is more realistic) and will completely gut the structure. The best news, however, is that exterior will be untouched and the Garden's unique ceiling, the one Dick Tiger was left staring at when he was leveled by Bob Foster and Roberto Duran was triumphantly lifted toward when he pummeled Davey Moore, will be preserved. ■

By Ivan Goldman

A Trace Of Psychopath In His Veins

Face it, folks. Joe Calzaghe is a bit of a psychopath. But I mean that in a good way.

The dictionary defines a psychopath as a "person who is mentally deranged, often prone to hurt others." Sure, fighters *have* to be prone to hurt others right from the opening bell. But the really great ones—and we rarely see more than one or two around at any given time, if that many—must also be at least a little mentally deranged when it counts.

Calzaghe demonstrated what I'm talking about when HBO Pay-Per-View showed a terrific slow-motion shot of him getting tagged by a face-crunching tornado of an uppercut from Roy Jones. It momentarily rearranged Calzaghe's face into something resembling one of those Pekinese pooches whose features look like they've been squeezed in a vise. Being on the wrong end of a shot like that could easily alter a person's life, and not for the better.

Fighters with great chins can survive even perfect, explosive punches like that one, so it wasn't terribly surprising that Calzaghe weathered the storm, just as Jones weathered his own storms. What distinguished Calzaghe was his surreal reaction to the beastly shot. The slow-motion camera caught him already launching a counterpunch (a right hook) even as his contorted face was still absorbing the horrific damage. Insane.

Such deep-seated ferocity resides inside a person's core being. It can't be taught nor easily found. Add breathtaking talent and the fisticator soars into that slim patch of territory inhabited by the all-time greats. Calzaghe would have earned a place there anyway, but the beautiful camera work leaves doubters with no ground to stand on.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Calzaghe puts some hurt on Jones

And speaking of doubters, I got up early just to read colleague Bill Dettloff's appraisal of Calzaghe's performance on thering-online.com. For cockeyed reasons he periodically shares with readers, Bill, normally a nice guy and astute writer, uses all the rational analysis of a junkyard dog when it comes to judging the feats of the undefeated Welshman, and I feared this 46th victory might snap one of Dettloff's neck arteries. Fortunately, Bill sur-

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Calzaghe shows his wacky side

vived the combinations southpaw Calzaghe rained all over Jones, and after presumably resting his battered psyche the rest of the weekend, he, to his credit, found nothing to denigrate in Calzaghe's performance. He then let us know that he still ranks him at a subterranean level in terms of great European fighters.

A clever argument because when it comes to rating fighters historically, nothing can be proved without access to a time machine. What can be proved is that Calzaghe vanquished 46 opponents and lost to none. In the process he walked over vicious punchers like Omar Sheika and Jeff Lacey and defeated speed demons like Mikkel Kessler, and all-time greats like Jones and Bernard Hopkins. The fact that Hopkins vanquished Kelly Pavlik so easily after getting knocked around the ring by Calzaghe left even more evidence of Calzaghe's mastery.

Fighters tire much quicker when they can't handle their opponent. Although many of us thought Hopkins was showing his age against Calzaghe, what he showed was the excellence of a half-crazy Welshman who's just enough of a psychopath to always win no matter what happens in there.

Magoo One: Librado Andrade quite correctly expected to be robbed if he didn't kayo hometowner Lucian Bute in their super middleweight title match in Montreal. What he didn't anticipate was that he would kayo Bute and get robbed anyway. In fact, he was robbed in so many ways it's not easy to sort them all out.

ShoBox commentators Steve Farhood and Nick Charles took particular exception to the "long count" taken by the referee after the 12th-round knockdown, but they failed to mention that Bute didn't even *beat* the extended count. He managed to stay on his feet by leaning against the ring-post, which is totally against the rules. A fighter cannot be saved by the bell, and the rules for a knockdown don't change in the final round. The fighter must be up and ready to continue.

You can't really blame Farhood and Charles for not citing the rule. It's no easy matter to collect your thoughts and explain them coherently in the face of such trashy officiating. Besides, some of what they were thinking probably would have violated the announcers' language code.

But there's more. Even before the knockdown, Bute was out on his feet, gloves down, looking away from his opponent. Allowing the bout to continue at that point was gambling with his life. Finally, although referee Marlon Wright pretended otherwise, Andrade was, as far as I could tell from my TV screen, in the corner where he belonged, and there was no reason to delay the count.

Ask yourself how this one would have been called if the roles were reversed and it was the hometown boy who'd kayoed his opponent. Obviously, a rematch should be mandatory, but aren't we all getting at least a little sick of fighters winning matches, getting robbed, and then having to fight the fight all over again? Librado should be going on to other things.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Bute down following Andrade's final-round assault

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

A bemused Andrade after getting the Royal Canadian shaft

Long-time California referee Pat Russell likened the situation to the famous decision by referee Richard Steele in 1990 when he called Meldrick Taylor out against Julio Cesar Chavez. "Richard Steele made one of the best calls I've ever seen in that fight," Russell said, because Taylor, he contended, was absolutely finished, unable to continue. "But Steele couldn't sell his decision to the crowd," Russell said. Years later, Nevada fans, many of them no doubt Taylor bettors, still booed Steele every chance they got. Russell didn't want to second-guess Wright, "but frankly," he said, "if he'd called Bute out, it would have been a very gutsy call."

In other words, it's one thing to know the rules, but that doesn't mean a hometown referee can run right out and easily buck an entire stadium crammed with partisan. But isn't that what referees are paid to do? Fighters deserve the same objectivity from officials that we see in baseball, where hometown decisions are unheard of. That's easier to achieve in a game where umpires travel a circuit and aren't beholden to a local commission. But Andrade won that fight, and referee Marlon Wright gets one big, fat Magoo.

Magoo Two: On the undercard, referee Michael Griffin apparently never heard of asking a fighter to step forward after being knocked down and beating the count. On two occasions in the sixth round, Griffin allowed super welter Paul Clavette to continue against Ronald Hearns when Clavette was wobbling like the New York Stock Exchange.

Magoo Three: Promoter Gary Shaw, although he performs some of his chores commendably, is no stranger to Magoos. This time he earns one for comments made after his super featherweight, Vic Darchinyan, brilliantly broke down the favored Cristian Mijares and kayoed him in the ninth round. Someone asked Shaw what the chances were for a Darchinyan rematch against Nonito Donaire, who'd smoked the "Raging Bull" from Australia in five rounds, dealing him his only loss. Shaw likened Donaire to a begging puppy who won't get what he wants.

Wait a minute. The *loser* won't give the *winner* a rematch? That's awfully strange, isn't it? Well, Donaire, you see, used to be a Shaw fighter, but he left the reservation to join Bob Arum's Top Rank. A promoter's lust for vengeance against his former fighter should never interfere with putting together the best contests. Darchinyan-Donaire II would be great for everyone, even Magoo recipient Shaw.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Another Magoo for Shaw

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

No way Campos didn't win a round

Magoo Four: Yes, Robin Taylor earns a Magoo for his outrageous 120-108 score for hometowner Dmitriy Salita over Derrick Campos on the undercard of Jones-Calzaghe. It was much, much closer. In fact, I recommend that Taylor and Montreal's Wright form their own commission in Outer Mongolia and wait there to hear from me. But the real issue here was junior welter Salita's goofball habit of spreading his feet and resting his butt on a low rope and sometimes even looking down at the canvas while he did it. How does he expect to get anything done from down there? If he needs a rest that badly, he should find a job testing mattresses.

Magoos Five And Six: Yes, he dances and prances and sometimes looks more than a little batty in there, but Emanuel Augustus won his eight-rounder against hometowner Francis Figueroa in their super lightweight match in New York. Judges Bill Costello and John McKaie scored it for the wrong guy in a split decision that judge Frank Lombardi had right.

Futch Award One: Enzo Calzaghe, the only trainer his son ever had.

Futch Award Two: Bernard Hopkins for his brilliant, action-filled performance in Atlantic City against Pavlik.

Futch Award Three: When the U.S. elected Barack Obama as its next President, it finally caught up with the sport of boxing, which for years has comprised arguably the least racist corner of America. Whomever we as individuals supported in the election, we all earned the right to feel proud of this remarkable milestone. "Senator Obama," said boxing fan and gracious senator from Arizona John McCain, "has achieved a great thing for himself and for his country." Stand up, America. You earned a Futch. ■

Augustus-Figueroa: Another bad decision

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

[Camera Clicks]

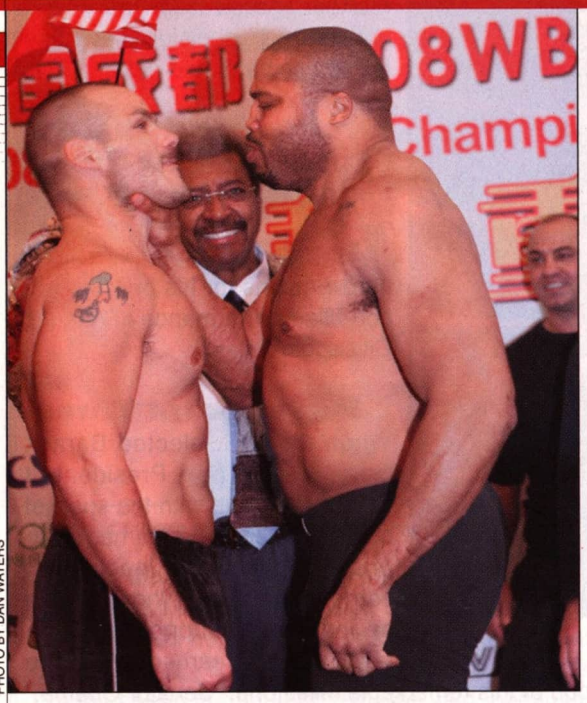


PHOTO BY DAN WATERS

Here's a photo that tells you something you already knew: Jameel McCline is a choker. Few fighters have mastered the art of snatching defeat from the jaws of victory quite like McCline, and here's he snatching opponent Mike Mollo by the jaw prior to their heavyweight clash in China in November. Ironically, "Big Time" actually beat Mollo by unanimous decision, snapping a three-fight losing streak.

Were there really more "Mexicans For Pacquiao" than Mexicans for De La Hoya? That's tough to say. But we can say for certain that there were for more Mexicans for Pacquiao than Filipinos for De La Hoya. In fact, anyone in the Philippines caught rooting for Oscar on December 6 was charged with treason and sentenced to the punishment of filling in for Manny as Jinkee Pacquiao's Lamaze partner.

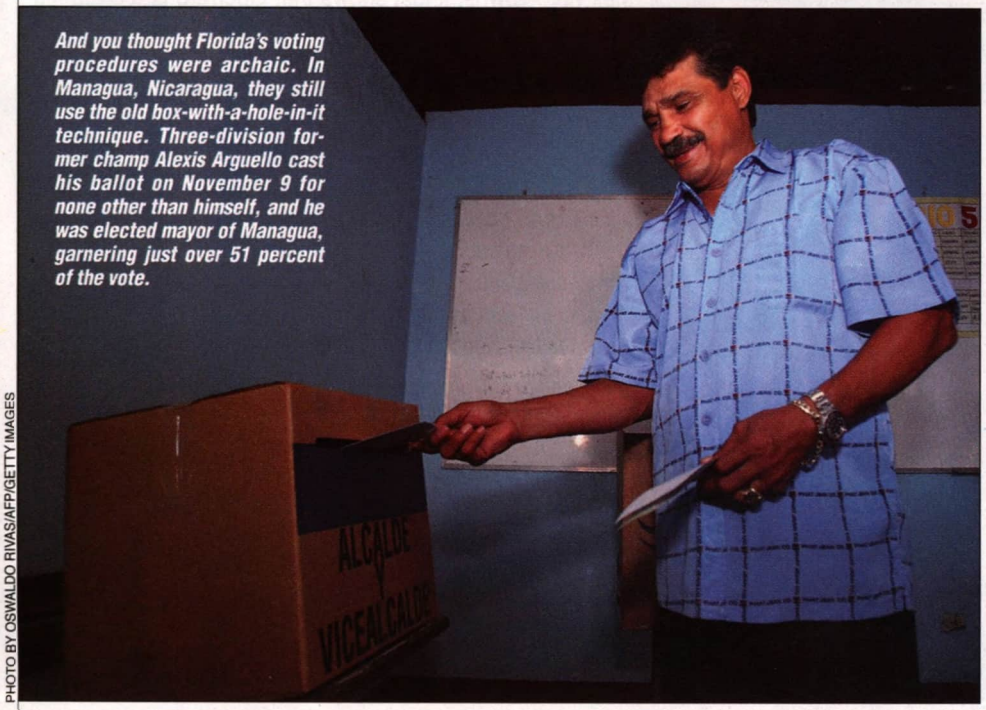
PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

We have just two words to say to undefeated lightweight prospect Sharif Bogere upon seeing this king-of-the-jungle get-up: Hakuna matata. Bogere wore this rather eye-catching outfit for his October 31 fight against Mike Peralta at the Hard Rock in Las Vegas; no truth to the rumor that he's going to wear a giant guitar on his head when he fights at the MGM Grand.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Finally, we have an explanation as to why Roy Jones' cutman proved so incompetent during his fight with Joe Calzaghe at Madison Square Garden: because he had these four distractions at ringside. Too bad Jones had too much blood in his eye to fully appreciate the view himself.



And you thought Florida's voting procedures were archaic. In Managua, Nicaragua, they still use the old box-with-a-hole-in-it technique. Three-division former champ Alexis Arguello cast his ballot on November 9 for none other than himself, and he was elected mayor of Managua, garnering just over 51 percent of the vote.

PHOTO BY OSWALDO RIVAS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

By Joseph Santoliquito
PHOTOS BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Fernando Guerrero Middleweight

Salisbury, Maryland is located an equidistance east from both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. It's a little coastal nook, about a 25-minute drive from the Atlantic Ocean. The tree-lined community of about 24,000 is known for its poultry, actress Linda Hamilton, and chicken king Frank Perdue. It's the kind of place where almost everyone knows everyone else on a first-name basis, and if they don't, you'll get a nod and a wave anyway.

It's also home to Fernando Guerrero—a world away from the cinderblock, dirt-floored domicile and barefoot existence he came from in the Dominican Republic.

Everyone in Salisbury is familiar with Guerrero's effervescent smile. They watched him grow up and become a world-class amateur fighter, and mornings when he's doing roadwork, car horns beep as townspeople drive by. Guerrero will raise his hand, beam that charismatic grin, and continue running.

Salisbury is also where many might not know the difference between a boxing ring and a bathtub ring. *But they do know Guerrero.*

It's why an overflow crowd of 6,000 packed the Wicomico Civic Center for Guerrero's 10th pro fight, when the 5'10" middleweight took on Tyrone Watson before a Showtime *ShoBox* audience in early-October. It's also why the capacity crowd left in droves before the main event as soon it was announced Guerrero had scored a unanimous eight-round victory in the semifinal.

That's a testament to Guerrero's popularity, whose diverse fan base includes everyone from the mayor of Salisbury to the local crackheads.

"We didn't know we'd get that kind of crowd; I was shocked," said *ShoBox* analyst Steve Farhood. "By today's standards, drawing 6,000 for a relatively nondescript eight-rounder is remarkable. There are prospects with much bigger reputations than Guerrero who wouldn't draw half that many in their hometowns. It just shows that Guerrero is a great kid who has a great sense and understanding of community. He has a warm smile and a hot style."

The 22-year-old southpaw is a local celebrity in Salisbury, and it's an interesting path that put him there. The dots of his life can be traced back to Huigui Village, an hour south of Santo Domingo, in the Dominican Republic. Guerrero is one of six children born to Pedro Guerrero. Fernando used to run through the streets shirtless and barefoot. It was a simple, uncomplicated life.

"We were wild in the Dominican Republic, doing what we wanted to do," Fernando said. "We were all poor, but we all got along. When I was hungry, if I didn't have something to eat at my house, I'd go to someone else's house and I'd eat there. We grew everything we ate. I had a roof over my head; I never starved. Actually, we had it good compared to others in the neighborhood. Other people thought we were rich because my father was always bringing clothes and shoes back from Puerto Rico. But we'd always throw the shoes away because we were so used to walking around barefoot. We didn't have crime; we were all happy."

Pedro, however, wanted something better for his family.

(Continued on Page 110)

Pro Record

2007		
Dec. 8	Derrick Douglas, Tunica, MS	KO 2
2008		
Jan. 26	Anthony Reese, Tunica	KO 1
March 1	Anthony Adams, Tunica	KO 1
March 27	Alfred Mouzon, North Charleston, SC	KO 1
April 9	Valentino Jalomo, Augusta, GA	KO 4
April 26	Anthony Bowman, Tunica	KO 3
May 24	Chuck Orso, Tunica	KO 1
June 21	Omid Bahreini, Memphis, TN	KO 1
July 26	Fernando Barajas, Tunica	KO 4
Oct. 3	Tyrone Watson, Salisbury, MD	W 8

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
10	10	0	0	9

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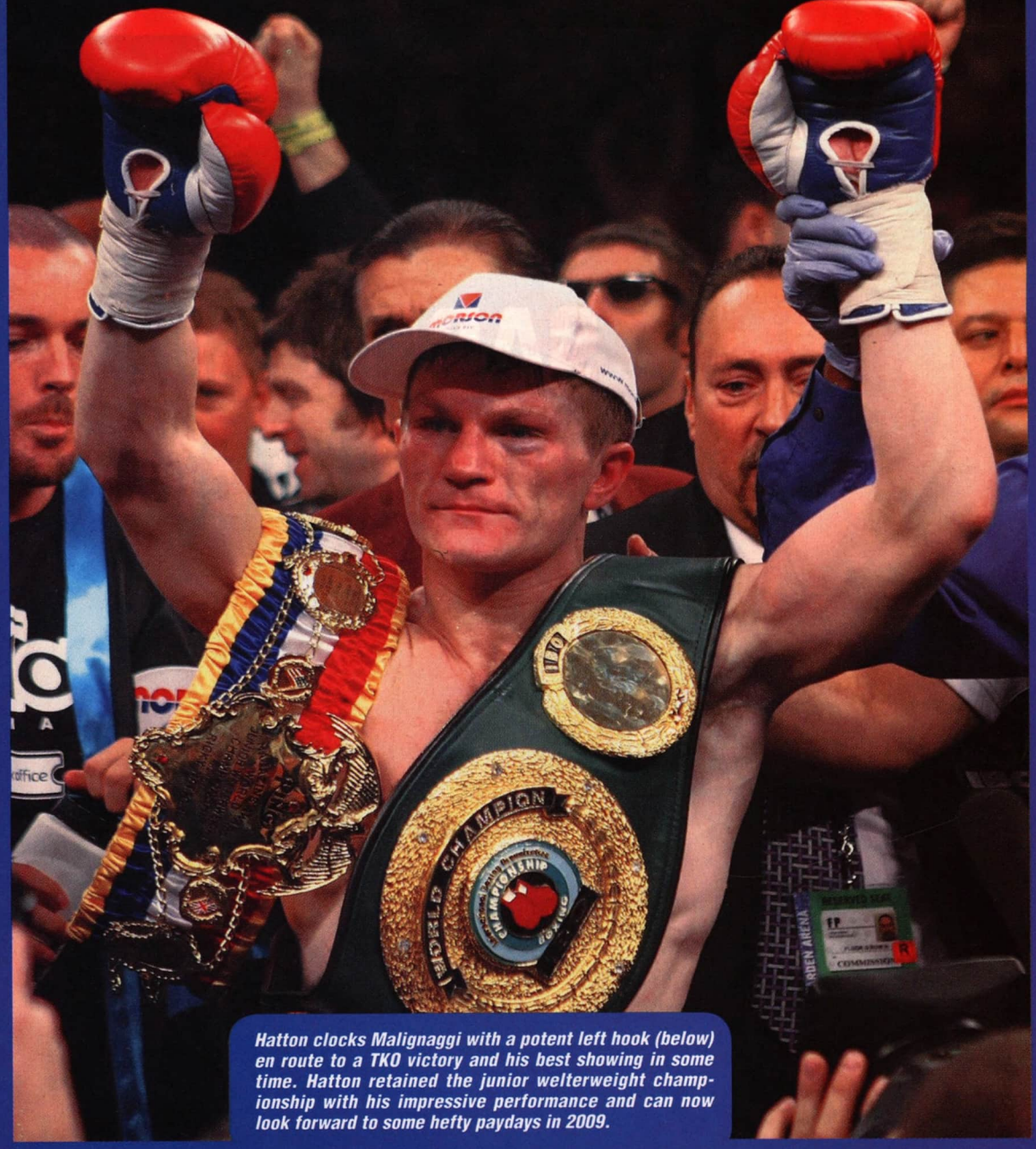

Hatton clocks Malignaggi with a potent left hook (below) en route to a TKO victory and his best showing in some time. Hatton retained the junior welterweight championship with his impressive performance and can now look forward to some hefty paydays in 2009.

PHOTOS BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

THE REBIRTH OF RICKY HATTON

New Trainer, New Attitude, New Opportunities

By Joseph Santoliquito

It was hard to believe that this was really Ricky Hatton, gliding across the red carpet of his dressing room in his bare feet and sequined blue trunks acting more like "Twinkletoes" than "Hitman." The usually plodding Hatton appeared as if he was a *Dancing With The Stars* contestant, rather than celebrating a very impressive victory over Paulie Malignaggi. All that was missing was Len Goodman, Carrie Ann Inaba, and Bruno Tonioli reading off the scores, because Hatton may have tallied straight 10s for the first time in his career.

"Look at me, look at me, who thought anyone would see me do this?" said a giggling, riotously happy Hatton, pointing downward to his shuffling feet, doing a quick tap dance and causing the congested postfight gaggle to burst into laughter. "No one believed I could dance, *and* I could sing."

Yes, on that particular night Hatton could do everything—even box almost as much as he slugged. It's something many thought Hatton couldn't do, but that was before he faced Malignaggi on November 22 before a crowd of 9,053 at the MGM Grand and HBO's home audience. THE RING junior welterweight world champion dominated a fight some skeptics had thought he might lose. Reacquainted with dormant skills under new trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr., the revised Hatton eventually forced Malignaggi's corner to throw in the towel at the 0:28 mark of the 11th round.

The victory places Hatton in a perfect position. The Manchester, England, native maintains his status as the most popular fighter in Britain. It also makes Hatton a lucrative target for any name opponent between 135 to 147 pounds. That could include the winner of the Oscar De La Hoya-Manny Pacquiao fight (which was scheduled after

PHOTOS BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Tale of two jabs: Malignaggi jabbed effectively on occasion (above) and even managed to raise a welt under Hatton's left eye. But Hatton also jabbed well (below), using the lead left to work his way inside instead of lunging in, as has become his habit in recent outings.

press time for this issue of THE RING) or a variety of other attractive options such as world lightweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez or lightweight contender Juan Diaz.

The Malignaggi victory restored Hatton's confidence. He felt redeemed, especially in the face of those who questioned whether or not he should keep fighting. Hatton was rebuilding after his first professional loss (in the same MGM Grand Arena ring), a December 2007 kayo defeat at the hands of Floyd Mayweather. Moreover, he looked jaded scoring a decision over Juan Lazcano in his first comeback fight, last May in Manchester.

Hatton is the Oscar De La Hoya of the UK in terms of his popularity. He drew 1.4 million pay-per-view buys against Mayweather, and that was for a fight that occurred at 4 o'clock in the morning Manchester time. As did the Malignaggi fight, after which Hatton told his bleary-eyed fans back home watching on Britain's Sky Sports, "I appreciate the support and all your backing, but WAKE UP!!!"

In a way, Hatton was announcing his return as a primetime fighter again.

"Think about that: 1.4 million buys, that's equal in Britain to what Oscar and Felix Trinidad did here in the U.S. and Puerto Rico," HBO ringside analyst Larry Merchant said. "Then you have the 57,000 that showed up live against Lazcano. That's really getting into the kind of massive numbers that are Oscar-like. It definitely gives Hatton all kinds of options. Now, after beating Lazcano and beating the number-one contender in Malignaggi, Hatton now has to be in a position to fight anyone he wants, because he generates so many dollars. Just like when Oscar was a lightweight."

De La Hoya was a virtual magnet at 135. Junior lightweight contenders John-John Molina, Genaro Hernandez, and Jesse James Leija all moved up to unsuccessfully challenge "The Golden Boy."

Hatton came right out and said he wasn't too sure he'd like to fight at 147 again, and even though he didn't name them individually, welterweight contenders Antonio Margarito, Miguel Cotto, and Paul Williams do seem too big for him. But that shouldn't deter lightweights such as Marquez, Diaz, or Nate Campbell from putting on five pounds to try and cash in.

"Any of those fighters would be more than willing to move up, I'd have to think," Merchant said. "If Malignaggi can make more than a million dollars to fight Hatton, Marquez has the kind of following that would be much more lucrative. These are big-deal fights. Hatton can fight moneymaking welterweights as well as lightweights and junior welters."

Malignaggi was supposed to pose problems. He is a poor man's Mayweather, winning with movement and hand speed, areas that in the past have caused Hatton trouble. And based on how he fared against "Pretty Boy Floyd," it seemed reasonable to think that Hatton would be vulnerable to Malignaggi's slick, counterpunching style. But it sure didn't turn out that way.

A motivated Hatton heard the doubts about his supposedly waning ability, his lifestyle finally catching up to him, and about his desire. He felt he answered the skeptics by dismantling and stopping Malignaggi for the first time in the challenger's career.

"I knew what the truth was, and that facing someone who, let's be realistic, is, or was, the best pound-for-pound fighter in the world in Floyd Mayweather, and stepping up to fight him, then being sick when I faced Lazcano, and really not training the way I liked, that all had to be factored

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Would reigning lightweight champion Juan Manuel Marquez be interested in moving up five pounds in order to challenge Hatton for the 140-pound title? He'd make a lot of money, but would also face punches like this right hand with which Hatton drilled Malignaggi.

in," Hatton said. "But no one thought it was. I knew I had to do something different. I knew I had to use boxing skills that I always knew I had, but everyone doubted, because all they saw was me brawling.

"I wanted to stop Malignaggi. It was important for me to shut people up and maybe open some eyes to the fact that I could do other things."

But more than anything else, Hatton had to maintain a belief in himself. The English press ripped into him for his performance against Lazcano, a few writers even going as far as to suggest that Hatton should retire.

"Unfortunately, there is a little trait in England with the media. They tend to build people up to pull them down again; it's a sports star's life in England. You're the flavor of the month, and then they forget you," said Hatton's father, Ray, who is also Ricky's manager. "That's why we took the Malignaggi fight. We wanted to go after who the best was, and [THE RING] had Malignaggi as the number-one contender. What better guy to go after than him? We were just looking for a great performance.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Some of the credit for Hatton's outstanding performance has to go to new trainer Floyd Mayweather Sr. It was Hatton's first fight without longtime trainer Billy Graham, but the champion was in great condition and said he could have gone 15 rounds if needed.

"Ricky wanted to prove to everyone he was still the best 140-pounder in the world. To Ricky, it was this sense that 'I haven't lost it.' At times, in quieter moments, Ricky thought about it. He knew he had a lot to overcome. But he still believed in himself. He still thought he was the best. He knew his true thoughts were the right ones."

Nevertheless, the Hattons thought a change had to be made. Hatton was growing stale under previous trainer Billy Graham. Enter Mayweather Sr.

The self-proclaimed "greatest trainer in the world" had Hatton on a distinctly

Hatton Mangles Malignaggi

Ricky Hatton made a proclamation that sounded more like a vow to himself and anyone else who was within earshot of THE RING junior welterweight world champion: "I'm going to look even better the next time I'm in the ring," he said to the group that gathered in his dressing room after his 11th round stoppage of Paulie Malignaggi.

Hatton, 140, Manchester, United Kingdom, was not only king of the junior welterweights, he was king of the moment, with stars like David Beckham and members of the Manchester rock band Oasis hanging on his every word.

For Hatton, 45-1(32), the victory showed that you could teach an old dog new tricks, or at least remind him of old ones. Thanks to his new trainer, Floyd Mayweather Sr., Hatton showed decent footwork and used his jab to get inside the taller, quicker Malignaggi, 25-2 (5).

"I think I showed everyone that I could box," Hatton said. "It's something I've been saying for a while, but no one was willing to believe me. Do you think they believe me now?"

Hatton certainly made a number of converts. He won every round except one on each of the judges' scorecards. Entering the 11th round, Hatton was way ahead, 99-91, according to judges Glenn Trowbridge (USA), Jerry Roth (USA), and Duane Ford (USA). Ford gave Malignaggi the first, Roth the fourth, and Trowbridge the fifth. Otherwise, it was all Hatton.

"The Hitman" encountered one major drawback and it came early in the fight. As Hatton was working his way toward Malignaggi, "The Magic Man" stung the world champion with a jab. The blow raised a welt under Hatton's left eye that swelled immediately.

"I'm thinking, *This is a nice way to start things*," Hatton said. "His jab really frustrated me early on."

But the Hatton mouse was nothing compared to the cut that was opened above Malignaggi's left eye. Hatton did further damage when he slammed a right cross into Malignaggi's jaw in the second round, which caused the Brooklyn, New York, resident's legs to buckle.

"From then on, it seemed every time I hit Malignaggi with something, it was like he was ready to go," Hatton said.

"I got buzzed in the second round, I'll admit it," said the 139-pound Malignaggi. "But that was it, Hatton never hurt me again. I found out he's not a monster puncher. I feel like I could have won the fight if I did what I was supposed to do. But I was too afraid to throw right hand. I broke the thing four times, so there's doubt every time I

different regimen than Graham, who made it to Las Vegas the weekend of the fight and spent most of his time in various MGM Grand bars, not even attending the fight in person.

Under Mayweather, Hatton did more cardiovascular work. He had him doing body-controlled exercises, like push-ups and pull-ups, and much less weight work than he did under Graham. Mayweather also had Hatton spar more frequently. Mayweather stressed head movement, throwing more jabs, using footwork, and closing distance with more punching and less lunging. Lunging is what resulted in Hatton getting stunned against Lazcano.

The extra aerobic training also involved a Hatton first—running mountains, though there is no truth to the rumor that Mayweather Sr. convinced Hatton to run mountains in Nevada by tying a keg of beer to a mountain lion.

"The scary thing is, Ricky can get better, a lot better," Mayweather said. "We only worked with each other for seven weeks. Wait until I get him for a whole training camp. I know you may find that tough to believe, but Ricky proved to me he has a lot of skills, ability he never really used before. We were fighting a pretty slick guy in Malignaggi. We knew he wasn't going to be there to be hit, so we had to track him down. Once we did that, we knew he would be in trouble."

Malignaggi appeared in trouble from the second round on, after Hatton connected with a right cross that clearly made the Brooklynite's legs buckle. Hatton knew it too. He charged out of his corner round after round. Anyone in his dressing room after the fight saw Hatton moving with the alacrity of someone about to get into the ring, not from someone who just went 11 rounds.

"I felt like I had so much left," Hatton said. "I would have been fresh if this fight went 15 rounds. It really is the best I've felt in a long while. Sometimes you're afraid to push your foot down on the gas because you don't know what reserves you have left. I could have pushed down on the gas at any time and had plenty left to finish strong."

The Malignaggi victory was arguably Hatton's most striking since he dispensed of Kostya Tszyu in June 2005 to win the world junior welterweight championship. Hatton came forward in that fight, imposing his will, generally out-muscling Tszyu, and eventually making him quit on his stool. Malignaggi didn't want to quit, but his trainer, Buddy McGirt, and his promoter, Lou DiBella, saw enough to intervene on behalf of their courageous fighter.

"I told Buddy to throw in the towel, I couldn't take it watching Paulie take punishment like that," DiBella said. "It is really a tribute to Hatton and how he fought. I've told Hatton and his people it's the best I think I saw him since he beat Tszyu in '05. I thought the stoppage was the right thing to do."

It's something Hatton wanted. It made his victory that much more complete.

"You sense something about a fighter, and I thought Malignaggi was ready to go, I just had to push a little more," Hatton said. "I know Malignaggi didn't have that much power, but he is a tough guy who throw my right. I screwed myself. I lost all credibility with this fight. [Trainer] Buddy [McGirt] told me if I didn't start punching, he was going to stop the fight, but I thought he was joking.

"I felt like a 40-year-old, I had everything I wanted and I didn't do it. I couldn't pull the trigger and I only have myself to blame. That's what is driving me up a wall, and something I'll always think back on, that I blew it. I felt like I could have done more, and I didn't."

By the 11th, Hatton had gradually built a gigantic points advantage. Malignaggi's face was bright red and considerably scuffed around his eyes and nose. McGirt told his fighter after the 10th that he was on the verge of stopping the fight if he saw him continue taking more punishment.

"I didn't want the fight stopped; Ricky was settling for the points win, and I've been in boxing long enough to know I didn't see the killer in Ricky's eyes," Malignaggi said. "I lasted against Miguel Cotto. I knew Ricky would have been happy with the points win."

Malignaggi found out otherwise, when the towel came flying into the ring and referee Kenny Bayless (USA) waved the fight over at the 0:28 mark.

"I think I answered the critics," Hatton said. "I know there were doubters out there about me. I don't think there are many after what they just saw."

—J. S.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Hatton sends Malignaggi reeling with a left

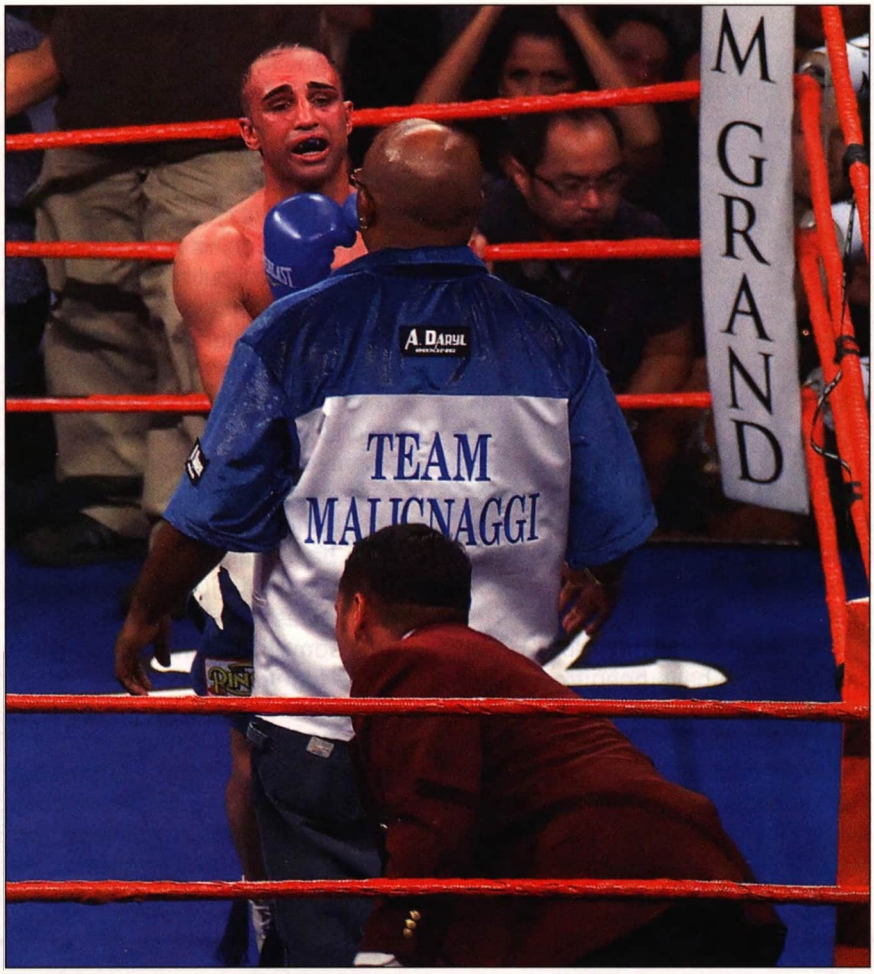

PHOTO BY RAY KASPROWICZ/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

A distressed Malignaggi protests to Buddy McGirt after his trainer told the referee to stop the fight early in the 11th round. Although Malignaggi could have probably lasted the distance, he was hopelessly behind and certainly didn't need to take any more punishment.

PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Troubled economic times in the UK meant that not as many Hatton fans could afford to cross the Atlantic to cheer him on as previously. Even so, there was still a sizable contingent of Brits at the MGM Grand, and Hatton's tremendous popularity makes it easier to promote major events.

hasn't been stopped. I know Miguel Cotto pounded him, but Cotto couldn't stop him. He fought back against Cotto and he fought back against me, but almost every punch I landed made him fall backward. I think there was one time, I was getting ready to throw a punch and I saw some old guy in the fifth row getting ready to duck, because he thought I'd be sending Malignaggi in his lap."

Where does Hatton go from here? He said he would take some time off, but when he and his team do decide to get back in the ring again, it will be after a three-month training camp—with Mayweather Sr.

To Hatton's credit, he still seems to have that fire in his belly for boxing. With his self-deprecating sense of humor (like wearing the Ricky Fatton costume during his ringwalk) and everyman persona, it also appears Hatton has gathered in American fight fans too.

The only hovering concern about Hatton is what will happen when he fights a seriously strong opponent, one who can punch much harder than Malignaggi. Will his between-fights lifestyle finally overtake him? You can't help but wonder how many more times the 30-year-old can blow up to 180 pounds and still be able to do what he did against Malignaggi?

"It becomes harder and harder to lose the weight and fight the scales, once a fighter reaches his late-20s," Merchant said. "There will be a time when Hatton will be wearing the Ricky Fatton costume and fill it out when he takes it off."

Hatton's aim is to get back in the ring sometime this spring—fighting with even more refinement than he did against Malignaggi.

"We may look at May for our next fight, after about an eight- or nine-week rest," Hatton said. "I'm going to try to listen to Mayweather about what I do during the time off. Right now, I want to go home, see my son, Campbell. I wouldn't rule out Oscar, if Oscar won; or Manny, if he won. It puts me in a lovely position. We'll basically see what happens. I think the only thing I'm asking is who, where, and when." ■

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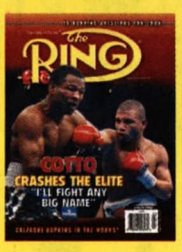

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From The Welsh Valleys To Madison Square Garden ...

CALZAGHE ACHIEVES HIS LIFELONG QUEST FOR RESPECT

By Joseph Santoliquito

Just beyond the scaffolding and temporary metal framework on Manhattan's Eighth Avenue, the Houndstooth Pub was bustling well after closing hours on a chilly November night. The black stretch limo parked alone in front suggested something was going on inside. It was a coronation of sorts, celebrated with chicken fingers, bottles and bottles of beer, and stacked boxes of pizza.

Joe Calzaghe, THE RING's light heavyweight king of the world, sat there in the congested dining lounge, hemmed in by uncles, aunts, cousins,

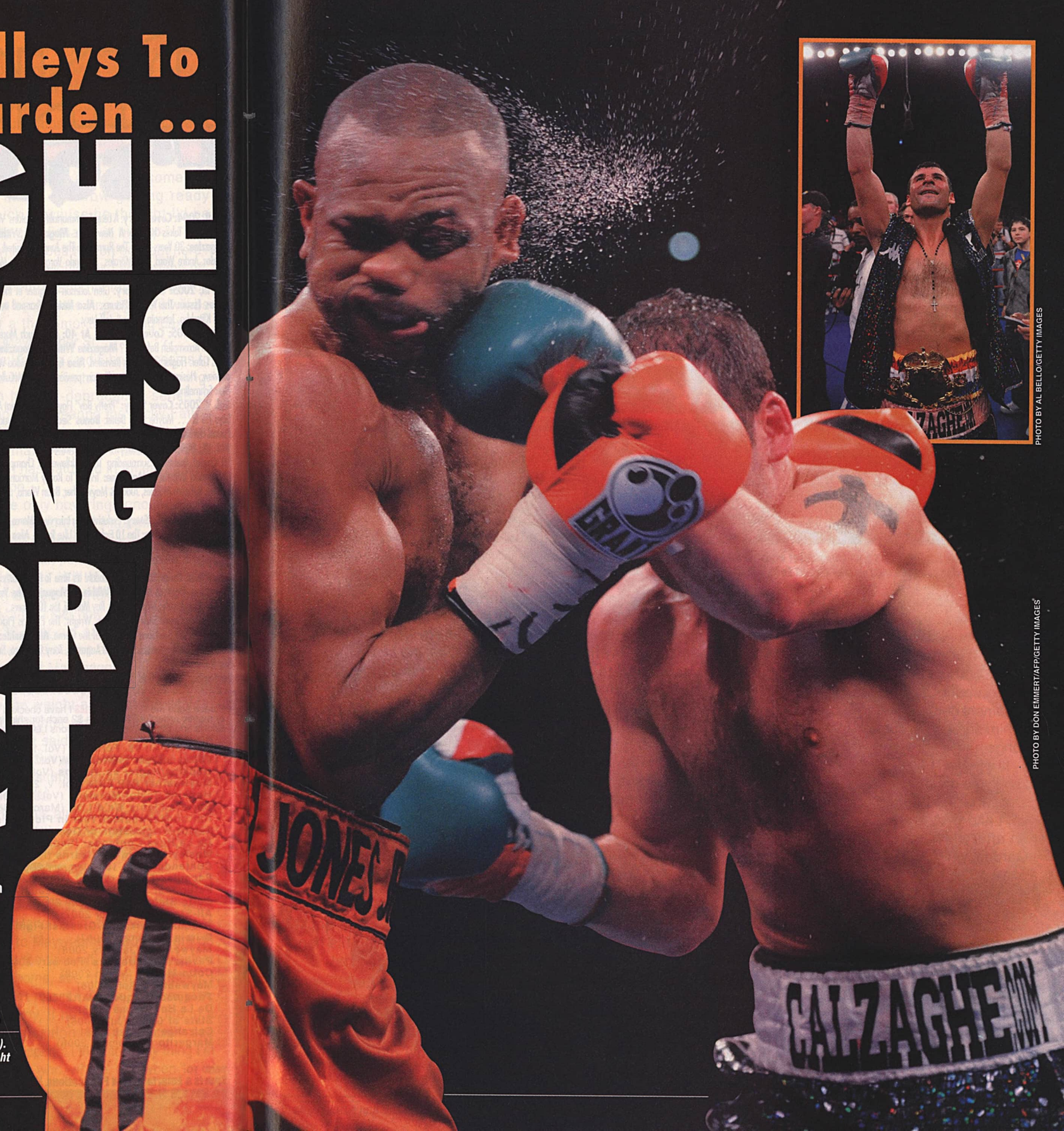


PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

PHOTO BY DON EMMERT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Calzaghe was simply too fast for Jones and dished out a prolonged beating to the faded superstar (right). The victory, in Calzaghe's Madison Square Garden debut, would be a perfect way for the undefeated light heavyweight champion to bow out. Whether or not he's had his final fight remains to been seen.

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Flashback: Jones almost pulled a stunning upset when he floored Calzaghe with a right uppercut in the first round, which was eerily reminiscent of the Hopkins fight. But Calzaghe beat referee Hubert Earle's count and was fighting back at the round-ending bell.

cousins of cousins, immediate family, and friends, wearing a grin under a nose leaking blood at the bridge. It was as if they had folded all of Wales and neatly tucked it in a space about the size of a basement den, where those closest to him serenaded "Super Joe" with songs and chants.

It was as if Calzaghe was frozen in the moment, still wearing the same black short-sleeve workout shirt and white sweatpants he had on after leaving Madison Square Garden, where he'd awed a crowd of 14,152 with his thorough pummeling of Roy Jones. Calzaghe was still having the time of his life, minus the shoulder wiggles, bolo punches, and chin-out taunts he tossed at his opponent earlier that night.

"I feel like I can go another 12 rounds without a problem," the smiling world champion said, as he greeted everyone who approached with a hearty hug. "But I don't know if I want to do this again. I have some thinking to do. My family wants me to quit, my boys don't want to see me fight anymore, my mother never wanted to see me fight at all. But if I go out, what a way to go, huh? I really don't know what could top this.

"I suppose doing this in Wales, at home, would have. But I have everyone who means everything to me here, with the exception of my mum. Everyone who ever took an interest in me, who really cares about me is here. Sharing it with them means everything. They helped get me here."

"Here" was the pinnacle of Calzaghe's remarkable career, a 12-round thrashing of Jones to reassert himself as one of the greatest fighters in the history of Great Britain. The brilliant performance against a first-ballot Hall of Famer could very well be his swan song. And inside the Houndstooth, he was in a warm, comfortable place, away from clutching fans and a gasping public, where he could be himself—just Joe, the bashful, inhibited young lad who was once picked on by neighborhood bullies and whose sisters, Sonia and Melissa, jokingly say they used to beat up.

They all seem to have a story about Joe. Like the countless times his father/trainer Enzo would give him a "caressing smack" when he would be late to the gym. Or the time Joe had 50 kids come after him for his bike, and Enzo told them his son would take them all on—one at a time. Then there were the myriad occasions the shy kid with the gentle smile backed away from ever raising his hands in anger when antagonized.

It's tough to imagine now any of those tales could be about the same man who is, pound-for-pound, one of the best fighters in the world. How did someone so timid become so bold?

"Joe never liked to fight, he was the most quiet, polite kid around," said Melissa, who resembles her older brother. "But Joe is a lot like my father, it just doesn't always show. It did against Jones. My father would have had fun like that if he were in the ring. They are a lot a like."

Sonia interrupted, saying, "I just remember Joe getting picked on all of the time, because the other kids knew he was a boxer and they all wanted to test him, and see how tough he was. It's funny, because those kids are grown men today, and they all wave at Joe as he drives by in his nice cars. These were the kids who all thought Joe was afraid of them."

Like American fight fans who thought Calzaghe feared coming to these shores. The prevailing attitude was that Calzaghe was a contrived European creation, along the lines of Dariusz Michalczewski and Sven Ottke, titlists who fought handpicked opponents exclusively in Europe.

No one could say that about Calzaghe now.

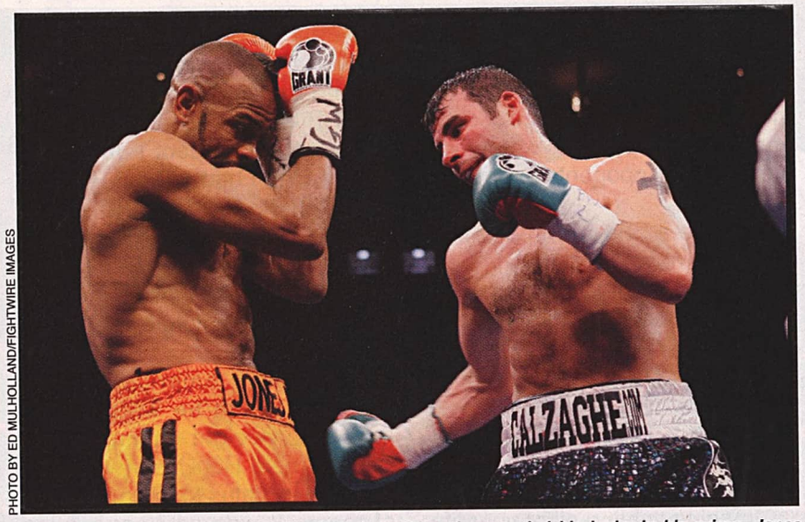
Though he hadn't fought in the United States until 2008, he was formally introduced to American boxing fans when he tore apart and exposed former Olympian Jeff Lacy to win THE RING's world super middleweight championship in March 2006.

"Imagine fighting all of your life, since you were a wee lad, looking for that respect as a champion, and being ignored. I wasn't ignored anymore after that," Calzaghe said. "Beating Lacy made Americans realize what I can do. It helped me get the Hopkins and Jones fights. Until then, I don't think I ever received the respect I deserved. To get that, I had to beat Hopkins and a legend like Jones, and I *had* to come to the United States to do it. I took the risk. They didn't come to me. I came to them to make it happen. I *had* to fight Hopkins and Jones."

Calzaghe's American debut, however, when he wrested the light heavyweight championship from Bernard Hopkins in April '08, caused his status to fall in the eyes of many. It was an unappealing affair that Calzaghe won by split-decision after getting up from a first-round knockdown. Calzaghe's showing seemed to support the

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Jones can no longer get away with holding is hands down around his waist, as is made clear by the way Calzaghe's southpaw jab splits his guard and sends the sweat flying. After the opening round, the official judges didn't give Jones a round.



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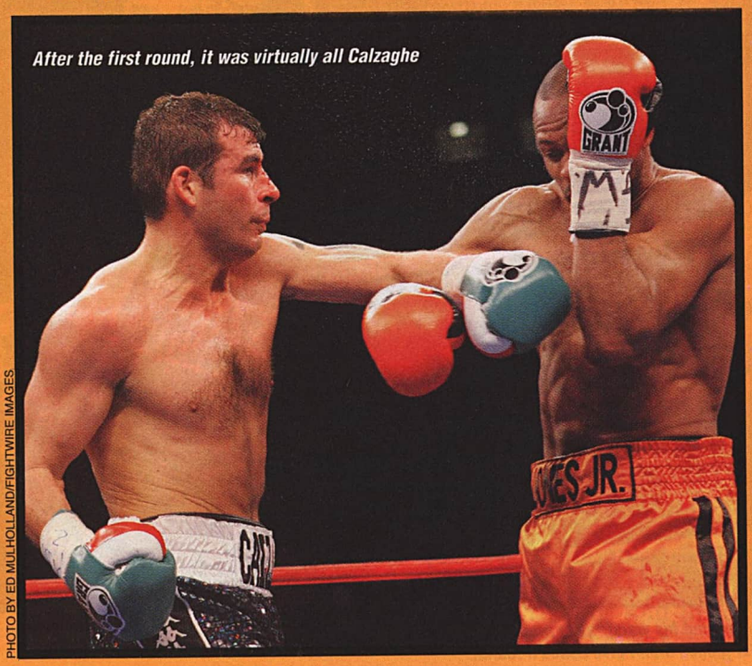
Whenever Jones went into a defensive shell, Calzaghe pounded his body. In his prime, Jones seemed impervious to bodyshots, but not now. " I couldn't figure him out," said Jones. "The pitty-pats were a little harder than I thought."

Brief Scare And A Then A Shutout

Joe Calzaghe had something to prove. THE RING's light heavyweight champion wanted to convince the world that he was among today's very best fighters—and what better setting than against Roy Jones at Madison Square Garden on HBO Pay-Per-View.

Calzaghe arrived on merit, thanks to beating Bernard Hopkins for the 175-pound championship, in April 2008. Jones, on the other hand, got there on name-value. Since he'd lost three straight (two by knockout) in 2004 and '05, he'd beaten the trio of Prince Badi Ajamu, Anthony Hanshaw, and Felix Trinidad (who hadn't fought in three years) to receive this gift opportunity.



After the first round, it was virtually all Calzaghe

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

For a brief span in the opening round, it appeared as if Jones would take full advantage, as he knocked down Calzaghe near the end of the frame. From ringside, it appeared as if Jones connected with a right uppercut, but television replays showed that the punch actually missed and Jones' right forearm slammed hard on Calzaghe's chin on the follow-through, sending Calzaghe to the floor.

Calzaghe, 174½, Newbridge, England, was momentarily stunned, but he got up gingerly and soon recovered.

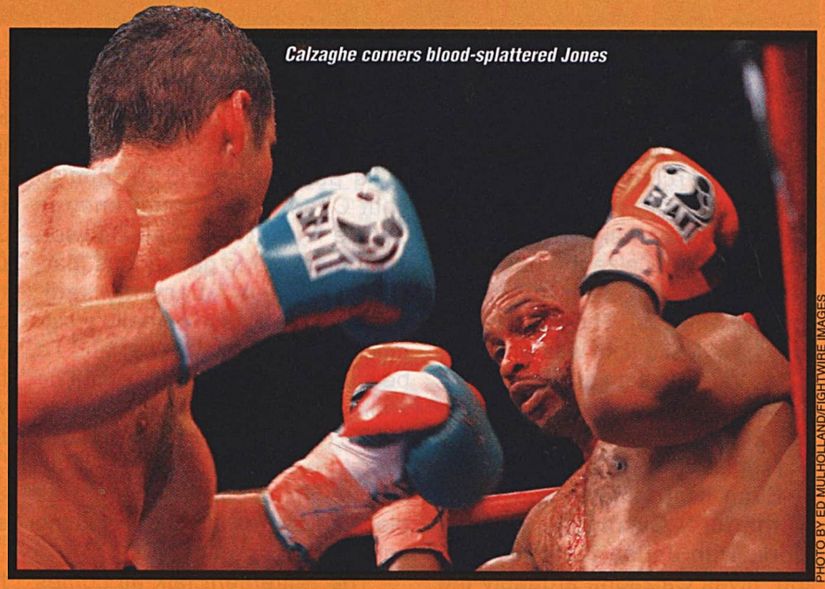
"In the first round, I kept my hands up and I got caught," Calzaghe said. "As soon as I dropped my hands, I didn't get caught. I do that in the gym. It's strange, but sometimes I get caught more with my hands up than with my hands at my side because of the angles and the way I move. There's no doubt Roy stunned me."

By the second round, Calzaghe, 36, began exerting his superiority over the 39-year-old Jones, 174½, Pensacola, Florida. He stung Jones with bodyshots whenever Jones retreated to a corner. From there, Calzaghe would pound away, working to cleave Jones' twin-pillar defense. By the third round, Calzaghe began showboating, sticking his chin out for Jones to hit, wiggling his shoulders, feinting bolo punches.

Jones could do little in response. In fact, Calzaghe was out-Jonesing Roy Jones.

"Joe was in shape to show off," said Enzo Calzaghe, Joe's father and trainer. "Obviously, I thought it was great. No one ever complained when Roy Jones did it to his opponents. Now he was having it done to him. I had no problems with it because Joe doesn't get hit."

Well, nowhere near as often as Jones did. According to CompuBox, Jones, 52-5 (38), connected with 159 total punches out of 479 thrown, while Calzaghe, 46-0 (32), landed 344 out of 985. Calzaghe connected on 224 powerpunches alone (of 623 thrown), and the constant bashing led to a nasty cut over Jones' left eye, the most severe in his career.



Calzaghe corners blood-splattered Jones

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

The decision was academic: Judges Julie Lederman (USA), Terry O'Connor (UK), and Jerry Roth (USA) all scored it the same, 118-109, for Calzaghe. THE RING had it a little closer, seeing it 117-110 for Calzaghe.

The referee was Hubert Earle (USA).

"I am overwhelmed at the moment," Calzaghe said immediately after his arm was raised in victory. "I wanted to show the world that I was a true champion."

—J. S.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Family affair: Enzo Calzaghe poses with his grandsons, Joe Jr. and Connor, following the Jones fight.

and Mikkel Kessler, the best in two weight classes, make him a shade better than Marciano's record, though Marciano might get the nod from some people because he was a heavyweight. There's no denying what Calzaghe has done throughout his career is nothing short of amazing. The last time he may have lost a fight was what, 16, 17 years ago as an amateur? How many world champion fighters can say that?"

Right now, just Calzaghe.

Even if no single fight leaps to the fore, Clazaghe's body of work, with Jones the cherry on top, gives Calzaghe arguably the best resume in boxing. No fighter currently rated by THE RING has beaten two number-one rated fighters in two separate weight divisions. Calzaghe has in Hopkins and Mikkel Kessler.

What's left for Calzaghe is anyone's guess. IBF titlist Chad Dawson has thrown his name out as a possibility. But would it be worth the risk for Calzaghe?

"I know there isn't a tremendous public demand for him to fight Chad Dawson; not enough people know who Chad Dawson is for that fight to get serious marquee attention," Lampley said. "Moreover, Dawson is really a significant risk for Calzaghe, and I'd be stunned if Calzaghe thought he should do it. Why risk that?"

The other possibility is a Hopkins rematch, which Team Calzaghe doubts will occur—unless it has plenty of zeroes attached, and the fight takes place in Wales.

"The retirement talk all comes from me; I want Joe done, finished," Enzo said. "He's been doing this since he was 11, 12, 13 years old. He destroyed Roy Jones like no one has before. What better way to go out? Hopkins can never change the fact that Joe beat him, and he'll never get a chance to reverse it."

Perhaps what stuck out most at the Houndstooth, what hinted that Jones could be Calzaghe's last fight, was the doting way in which Calzaghe looked at his sons, Joe Jr., 14, and Connor, 11. They weren't 10 feet away without Joe making a quick visual check of where they were. Joe Jr. is beginning to box himself. He runs with his grandfather, who is much easier on him than Enzo was on his father.

"My sons have followed me all over the world, and I think it's time I start following them around," said Joe Sr. "The pain I experienced in my hands throughout my career was for them, cutting weight and starving myself, for my sons. Boxing has ruled my life, and I have a great family and two great kids who will have a good life because of it."

As the long night turned into the morning of the next day, Joe Jr., Calzaghe's Mini-Me, curled up and dozed off in the corner of the Houndstooth lounge, tuning out the celebratory din. He's been watching his father win ever since he was a baby, and he may have witnessed him on a grand stage for the final time.

Before drifting off to dreamland, Joe Jr. gazed at his father with starry eyes.

"My dad is my favorite fighter," he said. "I always get nervous every time my dad fights, even when I know he'll win. By the middle of the fight, I'm calm. He'll wink at my brother or me and let us know he's okay. I don't know any kid in school who can ever say to me, 'My dad can beat up your dad.' My dad can beat anybody."

Even Superman. ■

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Feb. 1997: *KO*'s 1997 Wish List. Color Pinup: Ike Quartey. Interview: Naseem Hamed. Also: David Tua, Felix Trinidad, Adolpho Washington, Bobby Czyz.

Aug. 1997: Oscar Reaches … But Can't Grasp The Stars. Color Pinup: Nate Miller. Interview: Hector Camacho. Also: Norris-Trinidad preview, Hall of Fame, Angel Manfredy.

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May 1998: Living Up To The Hype: Sometimes They Do … Sometimes They Don't. Color Pinup: David Reid. Interview: Best Of … (Part III). Also: Naseem Hamed, Marty Denkin, women's boxing.

June 1998: Lewis vs. Holyfield: Why The Fight Of The Year Isn't Going To Happen. Color Pinup: Evander Holyfield. Interview: Eddie Futch. Also: Hector Lizarraga, pain, Head-To-Head review.

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Oct. 1998: The Ultimate Fantasy Card. Color Pinup: Oscar De La Hoya. Interview: Roy Jones. Also: Brendan Ingle, NYPD boxing, prospect blueprint.

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May 2000: Michael Grant vs. Lennox Lewis—25 Insiders Pick The Winner. Color Pinup: Paul Spadafora. Interview: Dan Goossen. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Johnny Tapia, southpaws.

June 2000: Lewis vs. Grant: Who Will Win … And Why. Color Pinup: Vitali Klitschko. Interview: Sharmba Mitchell. Also: Shane Mosley, David Izon, 2000 Hall of Fame.

July 2000: Today's Fighters, Tomorrow's Hall Of Famers. Color Pinup: Keith Holmes. Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Zab Judah, Morales-Barrera, Wayne Braithwaite.

Aug. 2000: Mosley Prepares For Oscar: "It Will Be Like The First Round Of Hagler-Hearns." Color Pinup: Steve Johnston. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Vargas-Quartey, Thomas Hearns, Felix Trinidad, common sense vs. cowardice.

Sept. 2000: Now Vargas Is Ready For Trinidad & De La Hoya. Color Pinup: Erik Morales. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Trinidad vs. all-time greats, Thomas Hearns, common sense vs. cowardice.

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Feb. 2001: Fernando Vargas' Internal Battle: If He Can't Win It, He Can't Beat Trinidad. Interview: Evander Holyfield. Also: Derrick Gainer, Roy Jones, Naseem Hamed.

April 2001: Lewis Is Too Much For Tua … But Could Tyson Do Any Better? Interview: Max Kellerman. Also: Floyd Mayweather, Wladimir Klitschko.

June 2001: Trinidad-Jones: Superfight Or Mismatch? Interview: Virgil Hill. Also: Mayweather-Corrales, Paul Ingle, Davey Hilton, Tyson's relationship with Vargas, Judah, and Mayweather.

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Feb. 2002: Bernard Hopkins: "I Am The American Dream. I Am The American Story." Interview: Wladimir Klitschko. Also: Omar Sheika, Vernon Forrest, Juan Lazcano.

April 2002: After Hitting Rock Bottom … Lennox Is Back On The Path To Greatness. Interview: Duva Boxing. Also: Zab Judah, Mike Tyson, Thomas Tate.

June 2002: Tyson vs. Lewis: 10-Page Preview & Analysis. Interview: Jameel McCline. Also: *Ali* movie, Dorin vs. Balbi & Ward vs. Leija.

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Dec. 2002: Wladimir Klitschko: Would He Be Too Much For Lennox? Interview: Joe Calzaghe. Also: Barrera-Morales II, Evander Holyfield, Freddie Roach.

Winter 2002: A Realistic Look At Tyson's Comeback: He Can't Make History, But He Can Make Millions. Interview: Micky Ward. Also: Antonio Tarver, Antwun Echols, Acelino Freitas.

March 2003: Oscar De La Hoya—The War That Rages Within. Interview: Klitschko brothers. Also: Kassim Ouma, Eric Morel, holiday gifts.

May 2003: Danger Zone! Will Roy Jones Be Doomed By His Heavyweight Ego? Interview: Buddy McGirt. Also: Gatti-Ward II, Floyd Mayweather, Erik Morales.

July 2003: Boxing's Biggest X-Factor: Can Hopkins Recover From His Self-Inflicted Wounds? Interview: Shane Mosley. Also: Kostya Tszyu, DaVarryl Williamson, 10 best defensive fighters.

Sept. 2003: Sugar Roy? How Jones Rates With The All-Time Greats. Interview: Chris Byrd. Also: Corrie Sanders, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Kermit Cintron.

Nov. 2003: De La Hoya-Mosley II: Will Three Years And Seven Pounds Make A Difference? Interview: James Toney. Also: Michael Watson, Erik Morales, Jones-Holyfield head-to-head.

Winter 2003: *KO* Interview Arturo Gatti: "Kostya Tszyu Needs Me More Than I Need Him." Also: Mayorga-Forrest II, Zab Judah, Corrales-Casamayor preview, Joe Calzaghe.

Feb. 2004: Shane Mosley: A Second Chance At Superstardom. Interview: Bernard Hopkins. Also: Laila Ali, Scott LeDoux, retirement.

April 2004: Human After All: Tarver Makes Jones Turn To Tyson. Interview: Emanuel Steward. Also: Sharmba Mitchell, Toney-McCline preview, trash-talking.

June 2004: What Could Tyson Do To Jones? Interview: Antonio Tarver. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Spinks-Mayorga.

Oct. 2004: Dr. Klitschko: The Perfect Band-Aid For The Heavyweight Division. Interview: Diego Corrales. Also: Monte Barrett, Cory Spinks, Vinny Paz & Sven Ottke.

Feb. 2005: Exclusive KO Interview—Manny Pacquiao. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Manning Galloway, quitting, perfect heavyweight.

Oct. 2005: El Feroz With A Twist: Re-tooled Vargas Gets Defensive. Interview: Zab Judah. Also: Marco Antonio Barrera, Jean-Marc Mormeck, Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., *KO* at 25.

Feb. 2006: Can Hip Hop Revitalize Boxing? Interview: Erik Morales. Also: Zab Judah, Ricardo Mayorga, Arturo Gatti, Luis Collazo, Roman Karmazin.

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A LOOK AHEAD TO 2009

Boxing will have to rely heavily on its most popular fighters to survive tough economic times, including heavyweight slugger David Haye (below), undefeated light heavyweight champion Joe Calzaghe (opposite page right), and welterweight assassin Antonio Margarito (opposite page left).

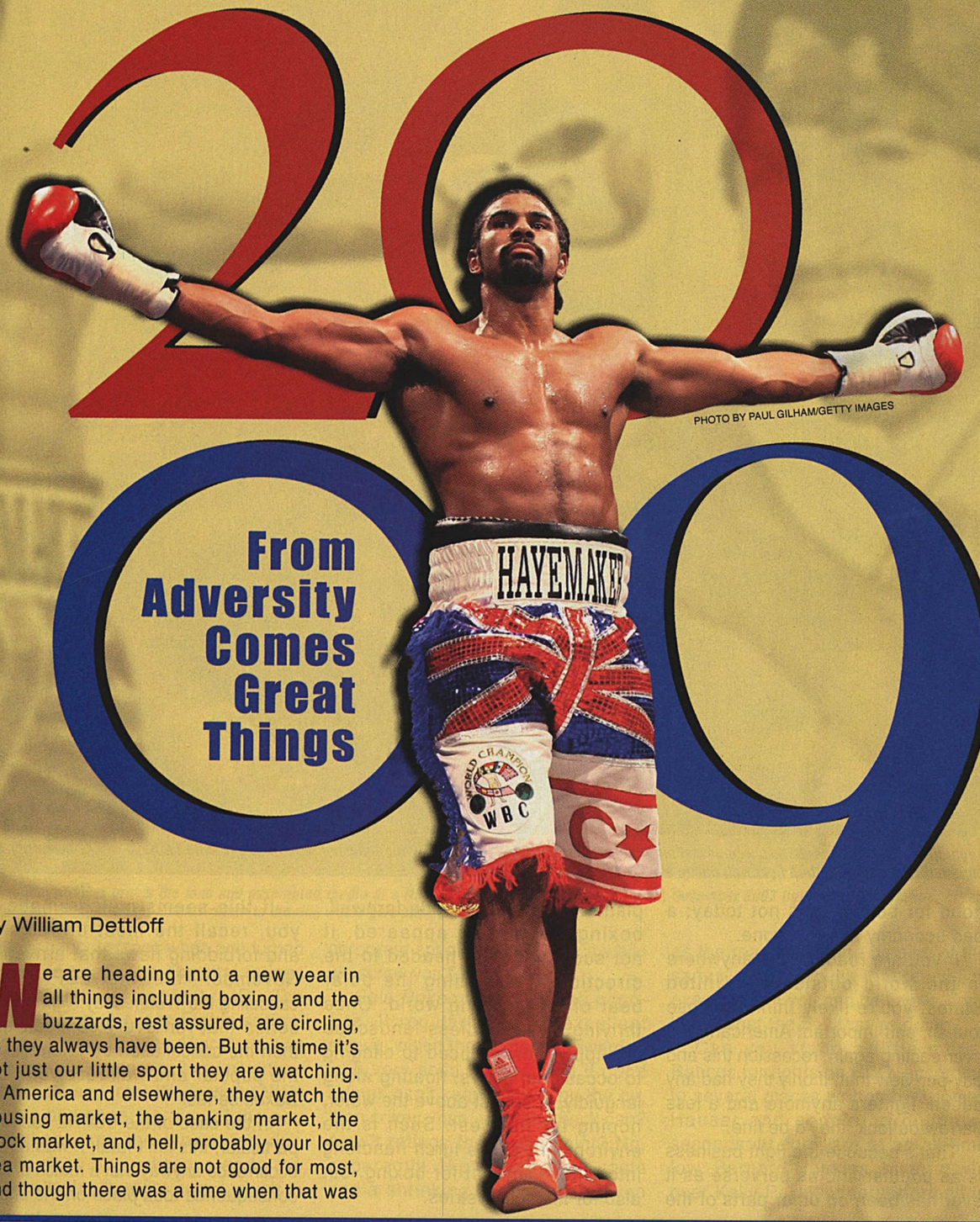

PHOTO BY PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES

From Adversity Comes Great Things

By William Dettloff

We are heading into a new year in all things including boxing, and the buzzards, rest assured, are circling, as they always have been. But this time it's not just our little sport they are watching. In America and elsewhere, they watch the housing market, the banking market, the stock market, and, hell, probably your local flea market. Things are not good for most, and though there was a time when that was

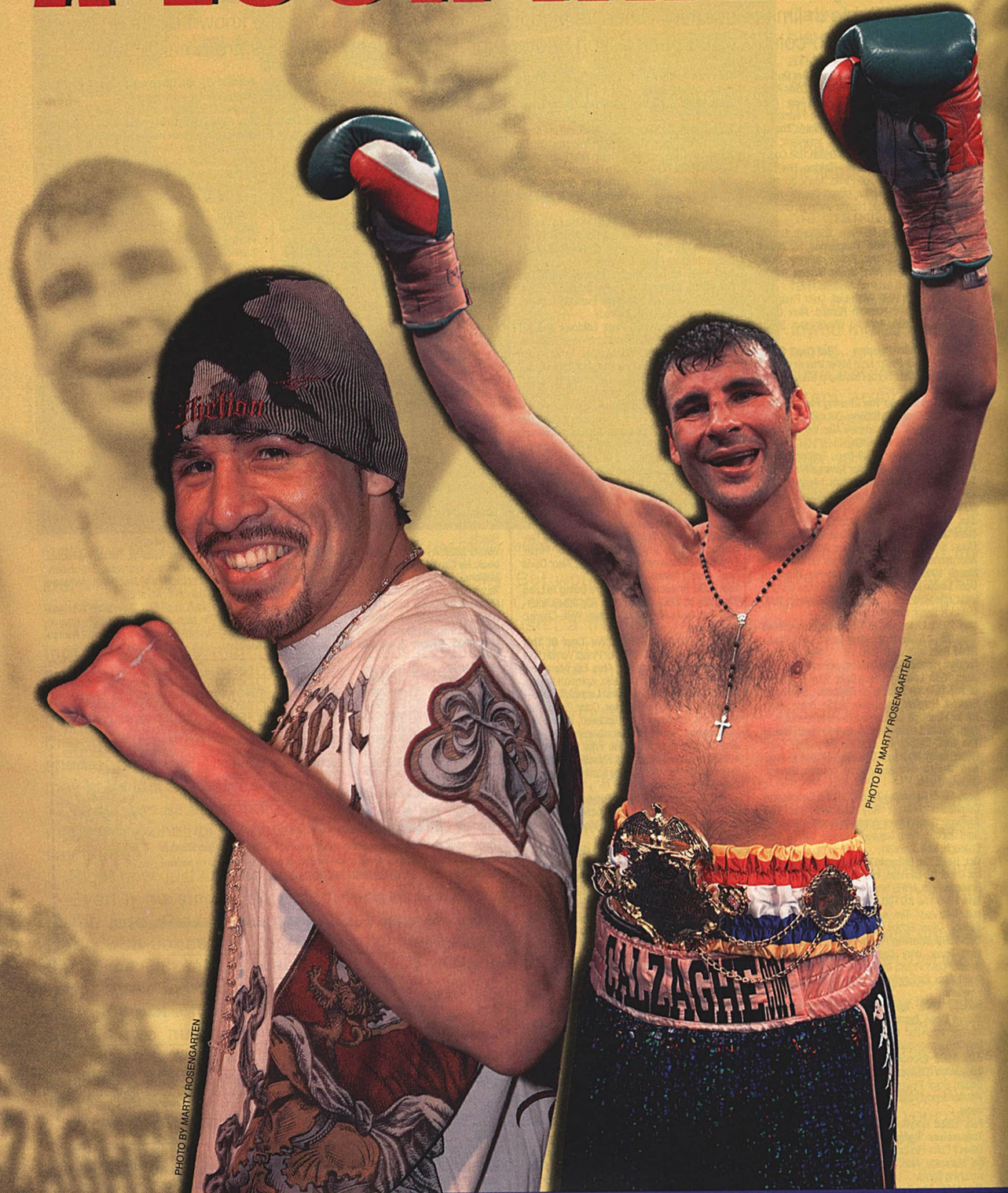

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

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PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/GOLDEN BOY PROMOTIONS

Regardless of whether or not he's won or lost his super fight with Manny Pacquiao by the time you read this, Oscar De La Hoya will remain critically important to the sport. A third fight with Shane Mosley would be fine in '09.

good for boxing, it is not today; a bad economy hits everyone.

If you are reading this anywhere in the world outside the United States, you're likely thinking those loutish, self-important Americans are overreacting again: recession this and pay-per-view that. If only they had any decent fighters anymore and a less narrow outlook, they'd be fine.

That's because the fight business is as popular and as perverse as it ever has been on other parts of the planet. But as 2008 bode farewell, boxing in America appeared, if not suddenly, then headed in the direction of becoming the polar bear of the sporting world: Once thriving on an endless landscape of supply, now reduced to clinging to occasional buoys, floating along languidly, nose just above the water, hoping for the best. Such is the environment as we lurch headlong into 2009—not just for boxing, but also for many industries.

If this seems melodramatic to you, recall the most unwelcome and forbidding news that arrived in November—first that ESPN2 was canceling the *Wednesday Night Fights* series that ran every summer, and then the cancellation by Telefutura of the popular and well-received *Solo Boxeo* series.

In the case of the ESPN2 series in particular, this isn't fatal; it was a rare occurrence anyway that a match of real consequence took place on the show,

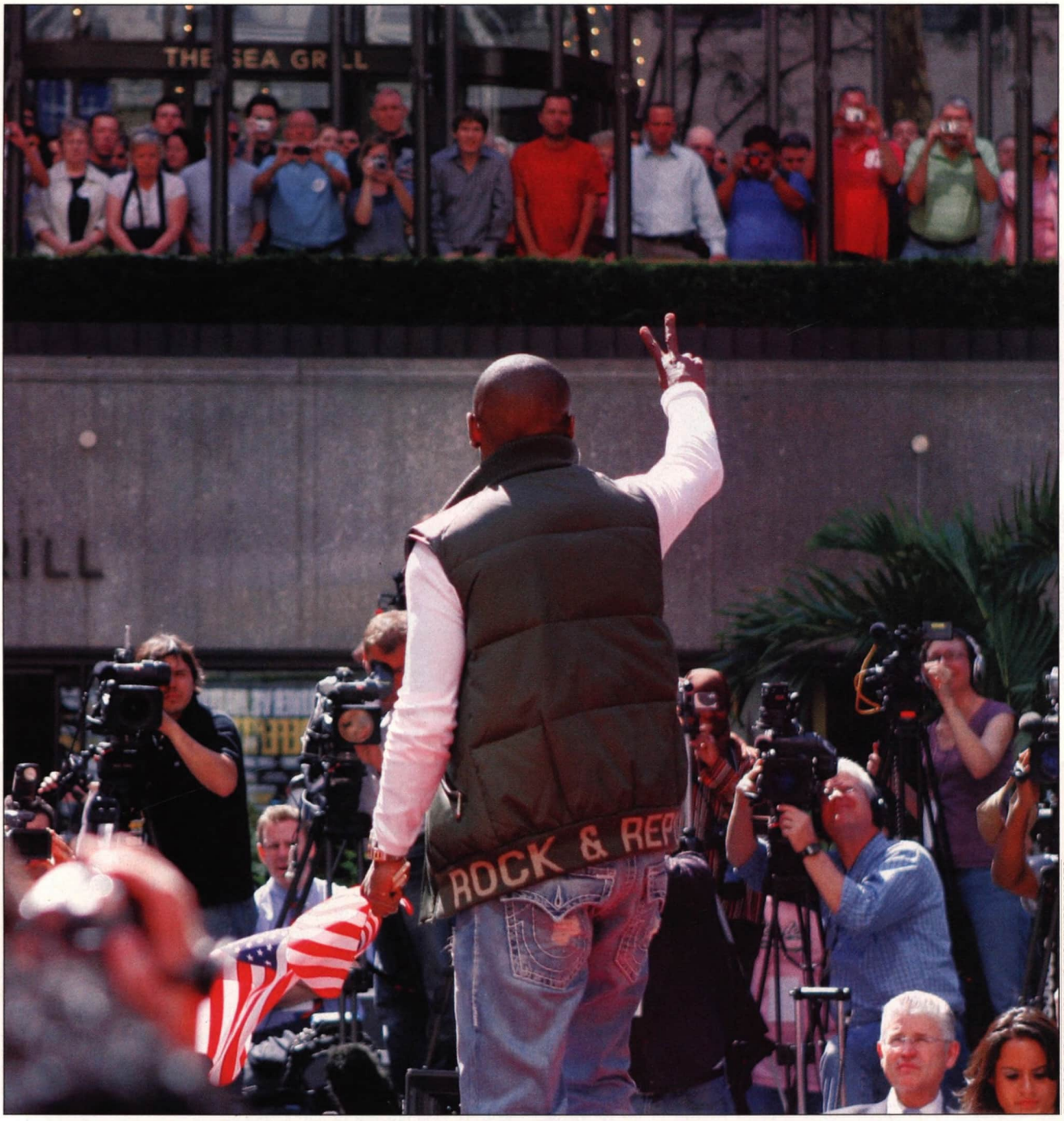

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Floyd Mayweather greets the fans and assembled media at a New York City press conference for his December 2007 fight with Ricky Hatton. "Pretty Boy" hasn't fought since, and his return to the ring would give boxing a huge boost.

and by happenstance when one turned out to be good. The abysmal ratings more or less reflected that reality. The regular *Friday Night Fights* series, while no prime *Boxing After Dark*, was consistently superior to its summertime cousin. At any rate, *Wednesday Night Fights* has gone the way of the pay telephone and the typewriter, due as much to obsolescence as to the ever popular "budget cuts," which is corporate speak for "now watch while we screw you."

Solo Boxeo was quite the opposite. It regularly put on excellent shows, which the audience rewarded with very solid ratings, and if good ratings can't keep a show on the air, then crikey, man, what the heck can? Aren't ratings the whole point? No, apparently. High production costs and a shrinking budget were given as the reasons for the demise of the series, which proves that television executives, if you can believe it, don't know what the hell they're doing.

Can you stand a little more? Ratings for fights on HBO, according to several pieces written by Thomas Hauser and appearing online at secondsout.com, are at an all-time low. Bernard Hopkins' historic win over Kelly Pavlik underperformed in

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Pacquiao preps for his bout with De La Hoya. Regardless of the outcome, "Pac-Man" will still be a superstar both back home in the Philippines and in the United States. A fight with Edwin Valero would be a thriller.

Wish List For 2009

This wouldn't be boxing if we didn't wish we could change it in some fairly major ways without compromising all the things about it that make it unique in the world of sport. Here are 13 things we're hoping happen in 2009. Some are big, some small, but all are for the betterment of our sport.

•A hospital worker in Kazakhstan discovers that a clerical error was made 35 years ago in the newborn wing and resulted in a pair of baby boys getting switched at discharge. It turns out Wladimir and Vitali aren't brothers after all and are free, as a consequence, to bash each other's brains in. See how far we're willing to go to get a heavyweight champion?

•We see Evander Holyfield in a ring for the last time, not because he's permanently incapacitated.

•More fighters and their management teams realize that the alphabet bodies and their belts are more trouble than they are worth and stop forfeiting large chunks of their hard-earned purses in "sanctioning fees."

•HBO dumps Lennox Lewis, finds a way to work both Max Kellerman and Larry Merchant into every broadcast, and hires back Lou DiBella to buy the fights.

•Creative bookkeeping at ESPN nets a way to spend more than $12.99 per *Friday Night Fights* broadcast and consequently gets guys in the main event who are fighters and not full-time roofers, med students, and busboys who fight twice every three years.

•Regime change in Cuba opens the door for hundreds of talented Cuban amateurs to turn pro.

•Fight writers stop referring to the instant replay rule in New Jersey as though it's something more than mere words on a piece of paper—because it isn't. Simultaneously, the Association of Boxing Commissions magically grows a set and mandates instant replay, for real, in every state in America.

•Spike Lee writes and directs an Oscar-winning *Rocky* knockoff about a black heavyweight from Detroit that is so commercially successful that it spawns five sequels and fills every inner-city gym in America with young, African-American hopefuls.

•We learn that Larry Hazzard has been working undercover at the IBF and has gotten enough dirt on all of the alphabet bandits to put them out of business.

•The premier cable television networks happen upon the colossal hypocrisy inherent in broadcasting all manner of soft-core porn and graphic violence while steadfastly steering cameras away from round card girls. And that, moreover, they

terms of pay-per-view numbers, even by the low standards set by other Hopkins pay-per-view affairs, as did Joe Calzaghe's win over Roy Jones.

Two pieces of good news: First, again, much of this coincides with slumps in the other industries. So it's not like we're alone. There's every reason to believe that as the economy picks up, assuming it does, so too will our little sport and we'll be back to watching our favorite fighters dent each other's skulls about as much as we want to.

And, second, as good and faithful drug addicts and alcoholics will tell you, one often has to hit "rock bottom" before deciding to turn things around. And that's a good thing.

As baseball statistician and writer Bill James wrote in his 1983 essay *The Law Of Competitive Balance*, "There develop over time separate and unequal strategies adopted by winners and losers; the balance of those strategies favors the losers, and thus serves constantly to narrow the difference between the two."

In other words, being on the losing end puts one in the uncomfortable position of constantly forcing oneself to try new things and experiment toward catching up to the "winner" (take your pick in this example—baseball, football, NASCAR, etc.).

For example, a smart and willing fighter who gets dropped in the first round of a fight is forced to make adjustments to get back into it, while his opponent spends the rest of the fight trying to duplicate what he did in the first round, many times to his detriment.

A cable television network signs the sport's biggest stars to long-term contracts, overpays them, and has no money left to develop new fighters. A smaller network can't compete with the first one's budget, so what does it do? Signs no long term contracts, spends far less money, and as often as not ends up broadcasting fights that are just as good as are the ones shown by its larger, top-heavier competitor. Follow?

It is not for nothing that Plato called necessity the mother of invention.

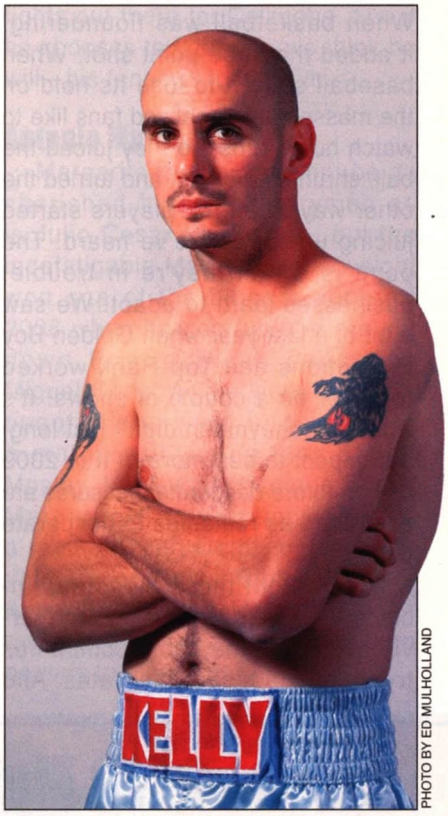

PHOTO BY ED MULHOLLAND

Even though he lost his undefeated record when Bernard Hopkins schooled him in a non-tile fight, Kelly Pavlik is still the world middleweight champion and retains his loyal fan base.

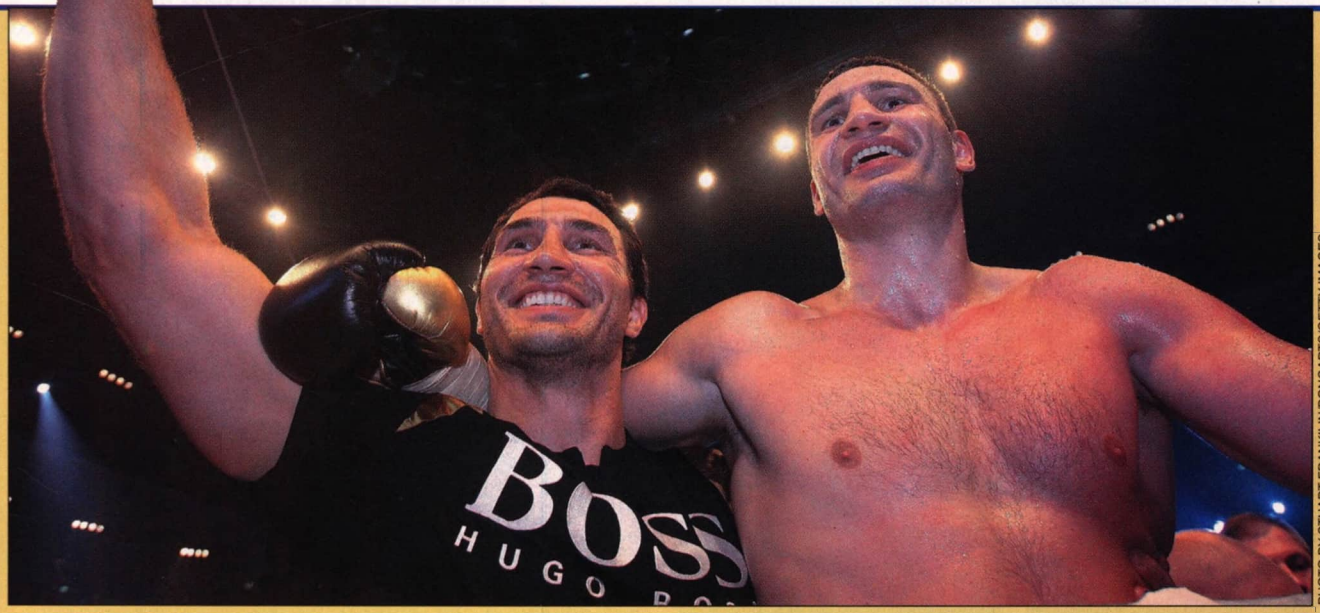

PHOTO BY STUART FRANKLIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

What if Wladimir and Vitali weren't really brothers after all?

feel ashamed enough to do something about it.

•Mike Tyson and Oscar De La Hoya open gyms in New York and Los Angeles, respectively, and their celebrity draws in hopeful young fighters by the dozens.

•Someone in charge at the International Boxing Hall of Fame suffers a moment of blinding clarity and retroactively boots out Jose Sulaiman.

•Doctors at the Mayo Clinic find ways to restore to good health Muhammad Ali. And Joe Frazier too.

—W. D.

When basketball was floundering, it added the three-point shot. When baseball started to lose its hold on the masses, they realized fans like to watch home runs, so they juiced the ball, shrunk the parks, and turned the other way when the players started juicing up. Or so we've heard. The point is, when they're in trouble, businesses learn to adapt. We saw a bit of it last year when Golden Boy Promotions and Top Rank worked together on a couple of shows. It's true the honeymoon didn't last long, but expect to see more of it in 2009 as heretofore-desperate measures are embraced as remedies to desperate times.

What might those measures include? Try less expensive pay-per-view fees, as the cable companies try to induce higher buy rates. And even fewer pay-per-view shows. Try lower ticket prices as promoters and fighters realize they can't command the money they did when everybody, even the average fight fan, had a few bucks in his pocket. And maybe also the continuation of a trend we saw begin last year: fewer obstacles to big, important, and interesting fights, something the fight business simply cannot do without *(see sidebar)*. For the time being at least, the market just may not bear mandatory mismatches and pay-per-view shows littered with mismatches underneath a modest main event.

Here's another: Promoters that actually promote fights rather than settling for a fat check from the nice TV people and leaving it at that. There are a few here and there that pummel media with e-mail and arrange public workouts (such as they are these days) and bang the drum. Many more pocket the site fee, pay their sanctioning fees, and try a few hands at the blackjack table before heading out of town. That's no way to run a sport.

We recognize that a lot of this might qualify as wishful thinking and that, rather than adapt to the changing economic landscape, the power players in this business might have enough cash stockpiled to ride out the downtime and return to business as usual as soon as the economy rebounds. Either way, the key to the sport emerging from 2009 as something still closer to the mainstream than, say, competitive hedge trimming is it stars.

Go back to the examples found in basketball and baseball. When

10 Fights We'd Like To See

We can all sit around wishing this or that miracle would grace the fight game, and who knows, anything could happen. But would it mean much if the actual fights were meaningless bores? We need big fights and interesting ones. Here are 10 we'd like to see in 2009 (in no particular order):

Israel Vazquez-Rafael Marquez IV

Sure, it would be nice if these guys were speaking clearly and getting around on their own in 15 years, but let's face it—it's probably too late already, especially for Vazquez, who has more scar tissue than Archak TerMeliksetian has tattoos.

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Will money bring Rafael Marquez and Israel Vazquez together a fourth time?

We say throw them in there again and let them make money now, while they still can.

Oscar De La Hoya-Shane Mosley III

So what if they're business partners? These two make good fights and given the close and controversial nature of their last fight, who wouldn't want to see this one again?

Kelly Pavlik-Arthur Abraham

Just because Bernard Hopkins took Pavlik to school doesn't mean Abraham would. "King Arthur" would be there to hit, and to hit back. Especially to hit back—ask Raul Marquez. This one is action from start to finish.

Juan Manuel Marquez-Nate Campbell

Not just because Campbell got screwed over by Joan Guzman and deserves a shot at the title, but because these are the two best lightweights in the world not named Pacquiao and they should fight. Period.

Vic Darchinyan-Fernando Montiel

Before Darchinyan's surprising win over Cristian Mijares, we would have put Jorge Arce's name here instead of Montiel's. Not anymore. Darchinyan wipes Arce out. Montiel, who can box or slug, is an entirely different proposition. Bombs away! Plus, it would fill THE RING championship vacancy at junior bantam.

Antonio Margarito-Miguel Cotto II

We all know what happens over the first half of this one—the same thing that happened over the first half of

the NBA was on a respirator, along came Magic Johnson and Larry Bird and then Michael Jordan. The league has been riding high ever since. The home run battle between Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa infused Major League Baseball with drama and excitement. Similarly, we need stars to lead the box office charge in 2009. Here's our list of the men that might do it:

David Haye

Haye's wild and woolly knockout of perennial trialhorse Monte Barrett in mid-November showed everything there is to love about this guy: He can punch like hell, he leaves himself wide open to counters, and he doesn't have the hardest jaw in the world. Is he the one to step up and claim the world heavyweight title? It may not matter; he talks a very good game, is exciting as all get-out, and already has gotten under the skin of the Brothers Klitschko. He also brings something that the heavyweight division has been lacking for a good long while: charisma.

Joe Calzaghe

Calzaghe said leading up to his fight with Roy Jones that he would retire afterward, but what does that mean? Not a whole lot in the fight game, not now, not ever. On the surface it would appear Calzaghe has run out of bigger name opponents, having already beaten Mikkel Kessler, Hopkins, and Jones. But what about Chad Dawson? Or a rejuvenated Pavlik? Or Arthur Abraham? There still are fights out there for Calzaghe, and if he chooses to fight on—we think he will—his fans will follow him.

Antonio Margarito

Margarito may or may not be as cherished by his countrymen as is Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., but the indefatigable Mexican welterweight won one of the biggest fights of 2008 when he beat up and ground down Puerto Rican sensation Miguel Cotto. As we went to press, negotiations were underway for a match with aging star Shane Mosley, but Sugar Shane is hardly Margarito's only option. There's a rematch with Cotto, or one with Williams, or Joshua Clottey. There's Andre Berto and a wide-open junior middleweight division just seven pounds to the north.

their first fight. The question and the drama and the fun of the rematch would be seeing if the same thing happens over the second half.

Wladimir Klitschko-Nicolay Valuev

Why, you ask? Because although we have nothing against Valuev, there's nothing more fun than watching a big, hairy giant get chopped down to size, and that's what happens here: a Grimm's fairy tale, 2009 style.

Manny Pacquiao-Edwin Valero

Regardless of the outcome of his fight with Oscar De La Hoya, Pacquiao remains a force of nature at 135 or 130 pounds, and he and Valero, who is maybe the most explosive puncher in the business, would produce real fireworks.

David Haye-Chris Arreola

Haye is a big puncher moving up, Arreola a clubbing, straight-ahead mauler who might be America's best heavyweight prospect. The question is, who backs up? We'd love to find out.

Ulises Solis-Nonito Donaire

What more could you ask for than two guys who can box and can punch? And don't give us this, "Donaire is too big" excuse. He weights 112 pounds! That's not too big for *anything*. This is the best fight that can be made between guys who weigh less than your average Philadelphia cheese steak.

—W. D.

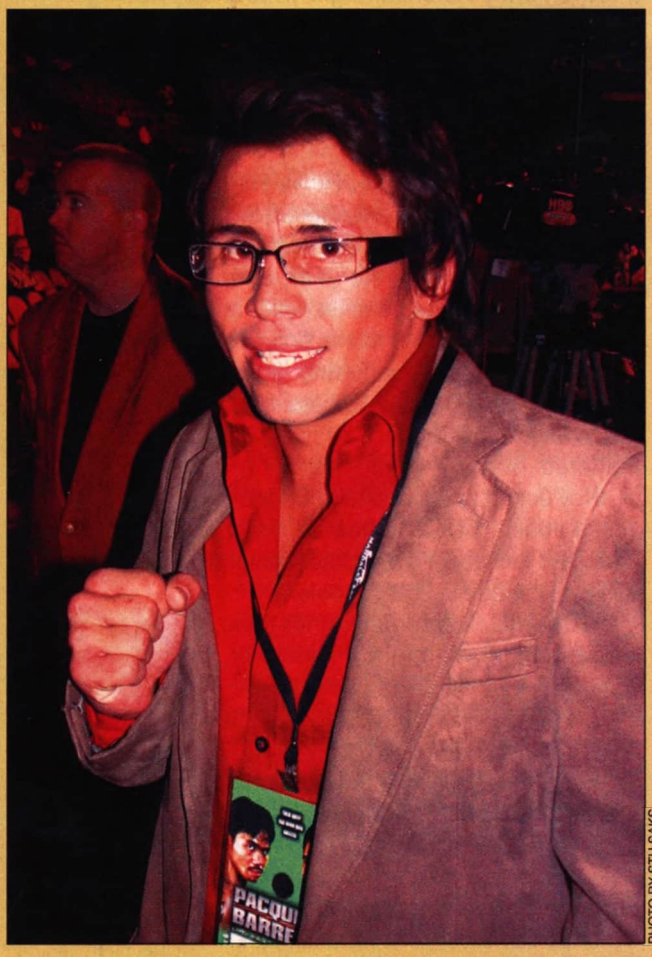

PHOTO BY STU SAKS

Who wouldn't want to see Pac-Man tangle with kayo artist Edwin Valero?

Oscar De La Hoya

Listen here: It matters not a wit whether De La Hoya has beaten or lost to Manny Pacquiao by the time you read this. He remains our sport's biggest star and its most consistently bankable attraction. Unless the outcome of his fight with Pacquiao changed his mind, he will continue to fight for as long as he's able to, and whenever he does, and against whomever it is, it's good for business. And that's good for all of us.

Floyd Mayweather

That's right—Mayweather, for a couple of reasons. First, we don't believe he's retired for good. We've never believed it. Not from Day One. Really nobody has, probably least of all Mayweather himself. He will be back as sure as you are reading this, because all the money in the world won't keep entertained forever a young man who can fight as well as he can. Also, when he comes back, it will be on a big stage. Mayweather

Predictions For 2009

There's a big difference between what we want to happen in 2009, and what we think will happen. We've covered the former; here's the latter:

•Stressed to the point of apoplexy by the proliferation of rogue and rival organizations siphoning off precious sanctioning fees, WBC kingpin Jose Sulaiman will declare all sanctioning bodies a deadly cancer on our beloved sport that must be eradicated immediately. All except the WBC and the WBA. Then there will be a convention. They'll serve cake.

•Joe Calzaghe will beat Glen Johnson, Chad Dawson, and Vitali Klitschko in consecutive fights and a few smarmy American fight writers still won't give him his due.

•There will be no world champions crowned named "Phil," "Ed," "Pete," or "Rinty."

•Very short robes and short trunks will not make a comeback. Tassels, maybe.

•To his great surprise, Ricky Hatton will receive exactly zero endorsement offers from companies that produce spray-on tanning solutions.

•Before the end of the year, a new milestone in boxing will be reached: the first-ever titleholder with no vowels anywhere in his name, first or last.

•At a promotional gathering in New York, a group of highly ranked heavyweights will be mistaken for the Washington Generals. They'll be okay with it. Flattered, even.

•Roy Jones will fight again. So too will Carl Daniels, Justin Juuko, Stevie Johnston, Felix Trinidad, Chris Byrd, and just about every other fighter that would have done well to quit in 2008 or before.

•Andrew Golota, on the other hand, will announce his retirement, quit in the middle of it, and make a comeback.

•Winky Wright will disappear again. No one will notice.

•Every time a website or writer promotes a match for the IBO, WBF, IBA, or whatever title, boxing will inch ever farther from sanity and credibility.

•Mikkel Kessler will go undefeated for the year. Lucian Bute will not. Ditto for Chris John. Juan Diaz will do well, as will Chad Dawson, Arthur Abraham, and Timothy Bradley. Kendall Holt, Felix Sturm, and Shane Mosley will not.

•Chris Arreola and James Toney will run into one another in the buffet line at a Ponderosa Steakhouse in California. There will be no survivors.

•Minutes after Jermain Taylor struggles to outpoint a super middleweight you've never heard of, Lou DiBella will declare him ready to take on Wladimir Klitschko. HBO will enthusiastically agree. In the ensuing fight, Klitschko will jab his way to a majority decision win.

—W. D.

PHOTO BY KLED NAVNTOFT/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Will Kessler go undefeated in 2009?

transcended the sport for a brief while and likes how that felt. He will do it again.

Manny Pacquiao

The great thing about the De La Hoya fight for Pacquiao is if he's lost by the time you read this, so what. He was abnormally outsized. With very little damage, if any, a loss will have done to his marketability, he can go right back to packing arenas and casinos with his loyal and loving fans, not to mention suffer virtually no loss of prestige among his adoring countrymen. And if he does slip a bit? It's nothing a win over Juan Manuel Marquez or Juan Diaz or Edwin Valero wouldn't cure.

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Man on the move: Originally a welterweight, Paul Williams was scheduled to fight Verno Phillips for a junior middleweight belt soon after this issue went to press. "The Punisher" could easily be a light heavyweight before he's through.

Kelly Pavlik

Pavlik is the latest example of the particular stranglehold our sport has on the what-have-you-done-for-me-lately mindset. Before he lost to Bernard Hopkins, he was the sport's next big star. His era's Archie Moore outboxes him and he's supposed to disappear? Don't count on it. Everything that made Pavlik exciting and interesting before holds, and Ohioans will still traverse the long ride between Youngstown and Atlantic City to watch him do battle with the other big names at or around 160 pounds.

Paul Williams

It is time for Williams to break out. His rematch win over Carlos Quintana, coupled with the less recent but no less important win over Margarito, the welterweight monster almost no one wants to fight, puts him in a unique spot among current contenders. So too do his size, his affability, and his skills. We expect that by the time you read this, he will have beaten Verno Phillips in his first serious fight at 154 pounds.

Of course, we can't know for sure what 2009 will bring. It could be the worst year in the sport's recent history, or it could be the start of an entirely new beginning, a painful but necessary transition to a new era borne of innovation, cooperation, and prosperity.

You can be certain of this: When the world has counted out this little sport of ours, when games of chance and of bats and balls and nets and goals have to the naked eye pushed it aside and made it appear irrelevant, that is when the spectacle of two men in a ring, armed with just their fists inside leather gloves, will be at its most appealing.

There is something of a feral nobility to this sport that cannot be duplicated in any other game, and despite all of our efforts to complicate it into oblivion, its simple and honest brutality will always win out in the end. ■

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Former cruiserweight champion Haye sends Barrett sprawling to the canvas en route to a fifth-round knockout. Regardless of how his heavyweight campaign plays out in the long run, the hard-hitting Londoner is expected to provide a much-need dose of excitement to the moribund division.

PHOTO BY PAUL GILHAM/GETTY IMAGES

HEAVYWEIGHT EXCITEMENT

An Oxymoron Courtesy Of David Haye

By Gavin Evans

David Haye's explosive fifth-round victory over Monte Barrett unleashed a much-needed force of excitement on an otherwise moribund heavyweight division.

The 28-year-old former world cruiserweight champion revealed several impressive strengths that could take him all the way, but also on display at London's O2 Arena on November 16 were vulnerabilities that could short-circuit his grand plan to succeed Lennox Lewis as heavyweight supremo.

Let's start with those assets: He's certainly the fastest heavyweight since the 1960s version of Muhammad Ali (and at 6'3", 215 pounds, not much bigger than Ali

PHOTO BY CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Haye connects with a left to Barrett's face. He hits so quickly and with such power, he doesn't even need a flush punch to put an opponent on the floor. It will be fun to see what happens when Haye starts tagging the upper echelon of the heavyweight division.

either). His quickness of hand and foot was highly impressive against the 226-pound Barrett, who, by heavyweight standards, is no slouch on the speed stakes himself. Haye has remarkably sharp reflexes as well as wonderful timing. Like Ali, he likes to fight with his hands low—and has the anticipation and head movement to get away with it (most of the time, anyway).

He has also carried his knockout potential up with him, and knows how to make openings, shifting his feet and changing angles to land his bombs. He never quite managed to tag Barrett with an on-the-button full-power shot, and yet he had him over five times, with the fourth and final knockdowns in particular revealing chilling power.

"I'm the hardest puncher, pound-for-pound, in the world, bar no-one," Haye insists. That may or may not be true, but he certainly hits hard enough to deck most of the world's top big men.

We could throw into the pot the fact that he loves to fight, he's good looking with the body to match, charming, and a great talker too—and, let's face it, it's no bad thing that his first language is English. All this helps make him a compelling force. The fight against Barrett was not particularly well-advertised and yet attracted 10,000 fans, and it's likely that the numbers will continue to grow.

What is so refreshing about Haye is that he's always been up for the toughest challenge. His last two years as a cruiserweight, for example, saw him stop the unbeaten Giacobbe Fragomeni (current WBC titlist) in nine, then step up to knock out the then 37-1 (20), 231-pound Polish heavyweight Tomasz Bonin in one before stopping world champion Jean-Marc Mormeck in seven, in his French backyard. And, finally, he settled scores with his local rival, WBO titlist Enzo Maccarinelli, in two.

In beating Barrett (after several other fringe contenders backed off) to begin his heavyweight campaign in earnest, he could hardly be accused of over-caution. The erratic, 34-7 (20), American was fresh from a one-round knockout victory of 41-2 (37), 265-pound Tye Fields and had a reputation for upsetting rising prospects, having broken the unbeaten records of Dominick Guinn and Owen Beck, while coming within a disputed whisker of doing the same to Joe Mesi.

But while that eagerness to tangle with the best is admirable, it is often accompanied by an over-eagerness to please the punters, prompting a cavalier attitude when Haye steps into the ring. Against Barrett, he boxed according to plan for two rounds: plenty of movement, working the angles, using his reflexes to make the bigger man miss and pay, but late in the second, "Two Gunz" cornered him and landed solid headshots. After this, Haye forgot the script and elected to slug it out.

"I'm so proud of him, but when we get back, I'm going to kick his arse because he threw the plan out after round two," Haye's manager-trainer, Adam Booth, complained. "Your first fight at heavyweight (actually Haye's fifth fight over 200 pounds) is not the time and place for that. Monte is a good counterpuncher, so we wanted David to draw him in, but instead David got drawn into a dogfight. He started slugging because he wanted to prove he had the balls, and after that he stopped following instructions. He wanted to get into a brawl and that took away some of his key advantages, like his sharpness."

That's quite a harsh criticism for what was essentially a one-sided fight from the third onward. After a few fierce exchanges, Haye landed a very quick left hook to the head. It didn't connect cleanly, but such was its speed and weight that Barrett fell, and Haye followed up with a glancing right as he touched down. Later in the round, Haye dropped him again, this time with a clubbing right hook behind the ear.

A jolting jab and a right put Barrett down again in the fourth, and at the end of the round the American was dropped once more, this time with a heavy right uppercut. Barrett struggled up at the count of nine and was saved by the bell.

Then, early in the fifth, came the moment of danger for the Londoner. He went for the knockout and was countered by a reflex left hook that put him down, partly from the punch and partly a slip. But Barrett followed through with a far harder left hook, which landed flush on the temple while Haye was on the canvas.

Haye was up immediately, but with referee Richie Davies deducting a point from Barrett, he opted to take a breather, with the result that 30 seconds passed between the foul

PHOTO BY MR. WILL/HOGANPHOTOS.COM

Haye's downside has always been his chin, which is often an easy target as he unleashes his big guns. He was decked by Barrett in the fifth round, but it was not ruled a knockdown, partially because Barrett hit him again while he was down.

PHOTO BY CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Referee James Davies rushes in to restrain Haye as Barrett crumbles to the floor at the O2 Arena in London. All told, the American journeyman was down five times before he was counted out at the 1:28 mark of the fifth round.

punch and the resumption of action. It was immediately clear that Haye's legs were firmer than Barrett's. A long left hook wobbled the visitor, and Haye followed through with a cracking cross and a final left hook that left the 37-year-old flat on his back. Davies dispensed with the count, and it was 25 seconds before Barrett was back on his feet.

Barrett said Haye was harder to hit than expected and grudgingly acknowledged his conqueror's power. "Look," he said, "anyone over 200 pounds can knock anyone out, but I didn't really feel hurt until the fourth round, and, of course, that last knockdown as well. My trouble was that I didn't stick to my game plan. I expected him to be more upright, but he fought very small, and I struggled to hit him."

Haye's fifth round tumble once again raised questions about his chin, questions that he made no attempt to dispel. "The actual knockdown punch wasn't much, but that second punch, while I was down, buzzed me a bit because I wasn't expecting it," he acknowledged. "But actually, it buzzed me no more than a couple of other punches he landed earlier. His punches felt a lot heavier than those of any cruiserweight. Even his jab felt like a cruiserweight right."

PHOTO BY MR. WILL/HOGANPHOTOS.COM

Manager-trainer Adam Booth celebrates with Haye as referee Davies lifts the fighter's arm in victory. Despite the spectacular win, Booth was a bit miffed because Haye abandoned his fight plan and opted to slug it out after the second round.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Haye looks like a star, he talks like a star, and he holds himself like a star. His cruiserweight accomplishments aside, can he be the heavyweight star boxing sorely needs? Beating Barrett convincingly was certainly a step in the right direction.

In Haye's seventh fight, in 2003, blown-up super-middleweight Lolenga Mock dropped him with a hook to the temple. Then, in his 11th fight, he was dropped and stopped on his feet in five by Carl Thompson, although exhaustion was the prime cause. And, in 2007, Jean-Mark Mormeck dropped him with a hook to the temple, before he got up to win.

Barrett is a sharp puncher, but carries nowhere near the firepower of either of the Klitschko brothers, or even lesser contenders like Hassim Rahman and Chris Arreola. Haye will have to box more cautiously in the future if he is to avoid getting knocked out.

Another query is Haye's stamina. Ever since the Thompson fight he

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has trained far harder and paced himself better, but he was breathing heavily by the end of the fourth round (although he insisted: "I was never out of breath") and when boxers tire, they get caught.

Next, there's the question of size. Barrett, no behemoth himself, looked considerably bigger than Haye and was able to push him around in the clinches, which raises questions about how he would cope with the 250 pounds of the 6'7½" Vitali Klitschko, who was at ringside watching the future opposition.

"I was very impressed with his speed and power," Vitali acknowledged. "But when I look at a fight, I don't do so like a member of the public. I analyze strengths and weaknesses, and I saw some weaknesses I will be able to use against him. I will knock him out. I'm sorry."

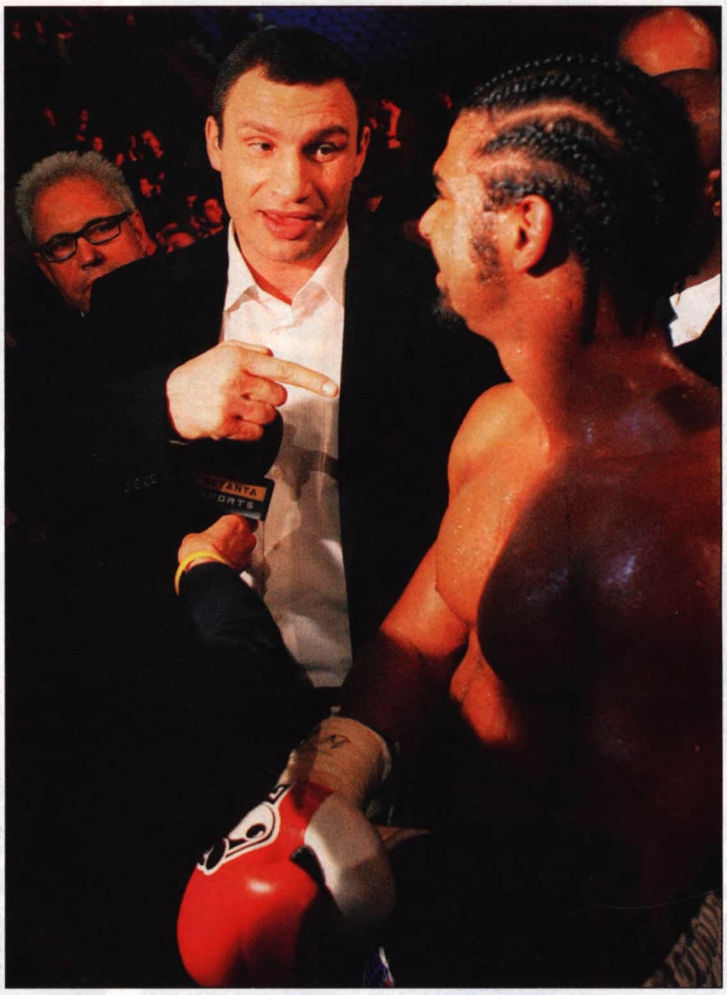

PHOTO BY CARL DE SOUZA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

A peek into the future: Vitali Klitschko makes a point while talking with Haye following the Barrett kayo. Haye wants both Klitschko brothers, but will most likely get Vitali first.

He declined to elaborate on the weaknesses, but what he would have seen is a small heavyweight (by contemporary standards) who loves to trade and can be decked.

Haye, however, insists there are no problems regarding size.

"I feel far stronger and my punching power has increased two-fold," he said. "People thought I might lose my speed, but I feel just as fast. I was 17 pounds more than for my last fight. For my next fight I will put on another three or four, and I will grow into the division in a way that I don't lose any of my speed."

Still, he won't have much time for growth. Both Klitschko brothers have mandatories to fulfill, but after that their calendars are free, and it seems they are pushing for Vitali to get there first (unless, said the ever-hopeful older brother, Lennox Lewis comes back, in which case the Haye gig will go to Wladmir).

To which Booth responded with a resigned shrug. "It looked like we were going to get the brother with the weak chin first," he said, "but now suddenly it seems they're angling for us to fight the one with the strong chin first."

Haye said he doesn't care which Klitschko he fights first; he wants to beat both.

"I'm nowhere near the finished article yet and only will be in a couple of years, but beating the Klitschko brothers will help me get there, and by the time I do, I will be unbeatable."

Asked about the huge size difference, Haye said he was unconcerned. "I accept they are the legitimately rated as the two best in the world, but that's why I want to fight them, and if they told me that was my next fight, I wouldn't hesitate. Look, Vitali is a huge lump, but I'll figure out a strategy to beat him. I'm so much faster than him and I'll use my speed to beat him. And look at the guys who beat Wladimir, such as Corrie Sanders. He's not much bigger than me, but he beat him on speed. Whichever one I fight, I'll take him out and then I'll take the other one out—and I'll do it in style."

It is likely that Haye will have at least one more "warm-up" fight, against another fringe contender, probably in February, after which he will enter serious negotiations to take on one of the Klitshkos in the summer. Right now, you'd have to favor both brothers, but the odds would be a lot closer against the vulnerable Wladimir, who has been stopped three times and dropped 10 times, than the stronger, more awkward Vitali, who has never been down.

The loquacious Londoner beams at this kind of speculation: He loves proving doubters wrong. "I want those heavyweight championship titles," he said. "I did it at cruiserweight and I'll do the same in the heavyweight division."

Many boxers talk like this, but when the squeeze is on, they tend to desist. Haye is different: He means to deliver. And whatever transpires, his arrival injects a big dose of guaranteed excitement into the sport's premier division, just when it is most needed. ■

Gavin Evans, a London-based freelancer and regular contributor to THE RING, was ringside at the O2 Arena for Haye-Barrett.

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Taylor, Kessler, Bute, And Maybe Even Hopkins

THE SCRAMBLE TO REPLACE CALZAG HE

By Don Stradley

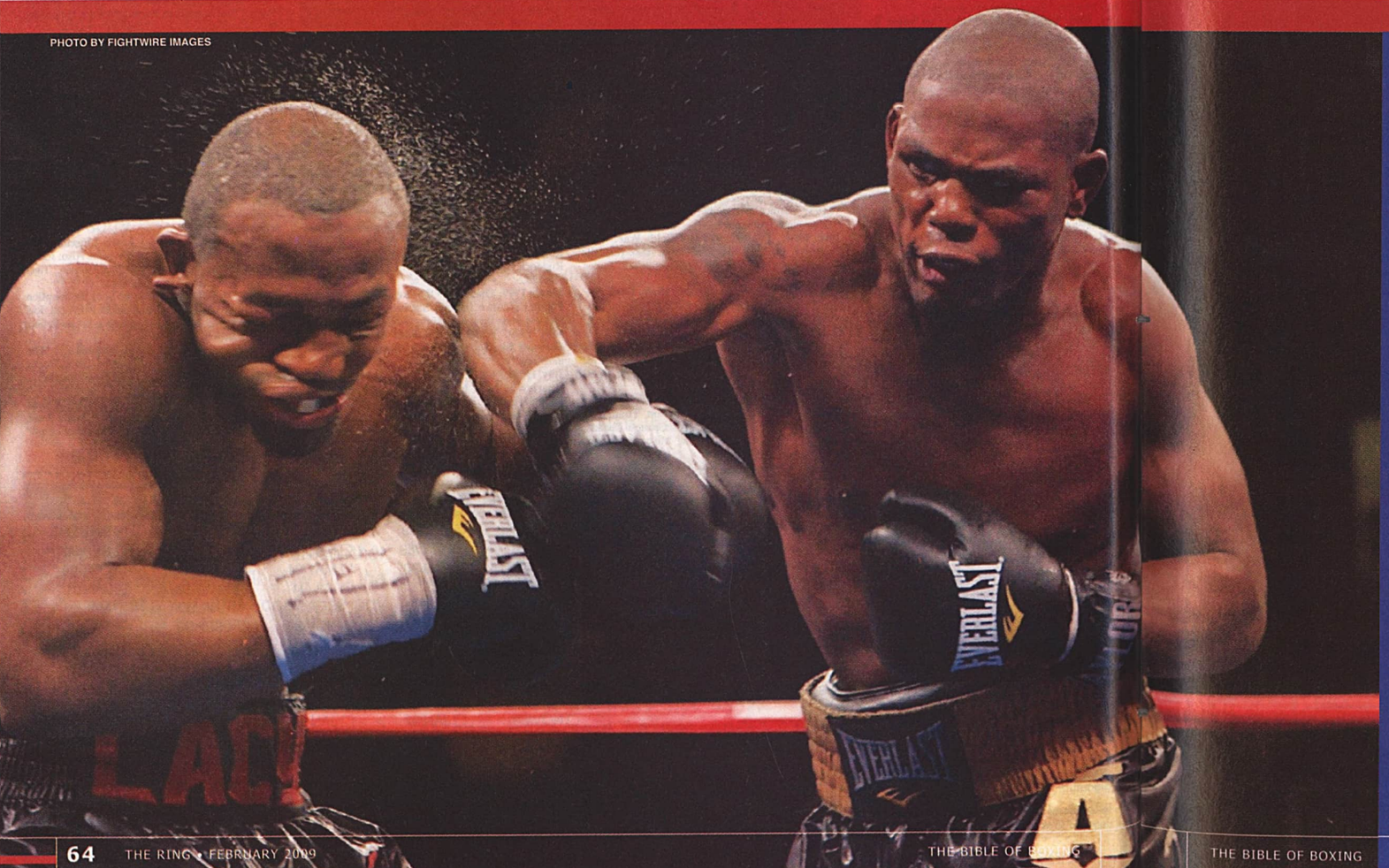
It will take more than a lopsided decision win over Jeff Lacy to make us think of Jermain Taylor as anything more than an incomplete fighter, but his performance in Nashville on November 15 certainly fired up his loyal promoter, Lou DiBella. Talkative Lou immediately brought up Joe Calzaghe as Taylor's next target. Taylor also seemed eager to mix it up with Calzaghe, as if beating a one-armed, slightly spent version of Lacy can vault one to the top of the 168-pound ranks.

"If they want us, we will be happy to go to Wales," DiBella said.

Don't book that flight just yet, Lou. In an e-mail dated September 28, 2008, Calzaghe informed THE RING that he was departing for heavier pastures. Calzaghe wrote, "I have decided to relinquish THE RING super middleweight title because it has become clear to me in training for my fight against Roy Jones that I will never make 12 stone (168 pounds) again."

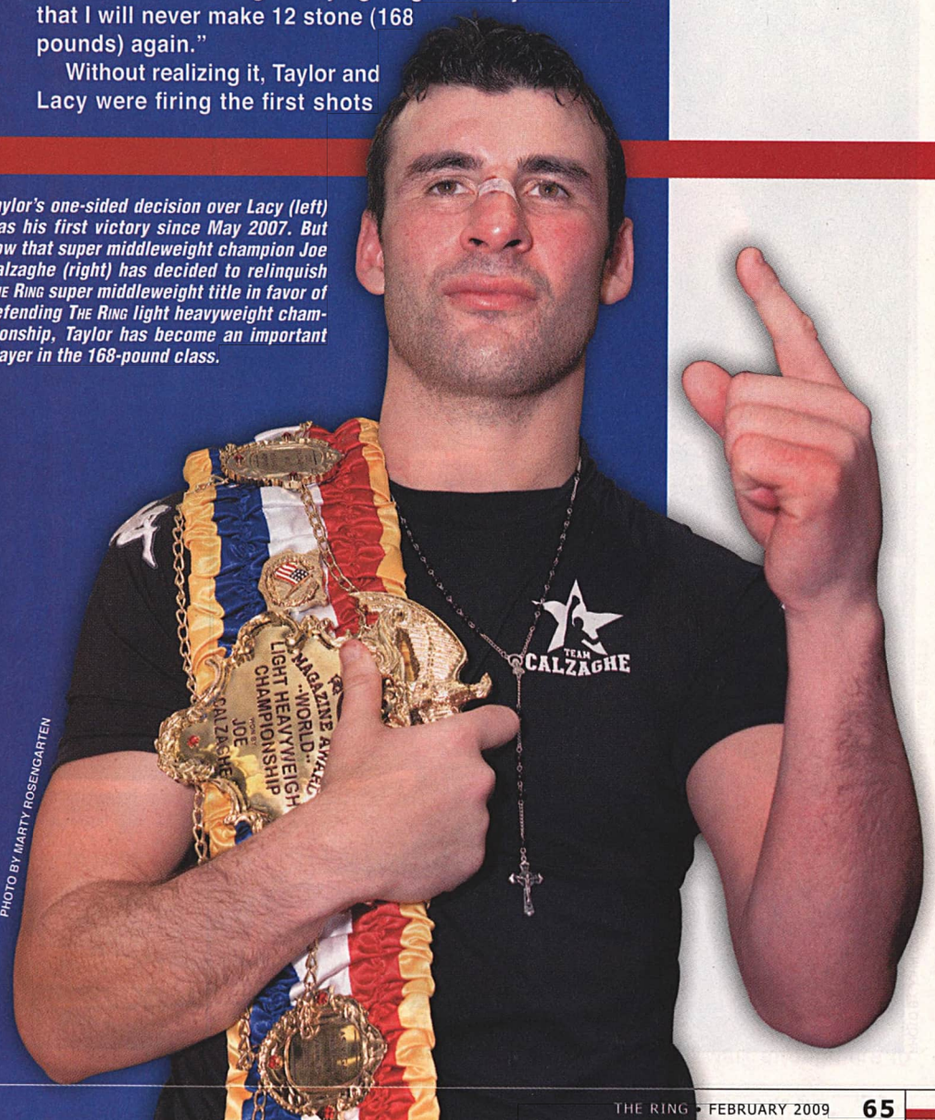
Without realizing it, Taylor and Lacy were firing the first shots

PHOTO BY FIGHTWIRE IMAGES



Taylor's one-sided decision over Lacy (left) was his first victory since May 2007. But now that super middleweight champion Joe Calzaghe (right) has decided to relinquish THE RING super middleweight title in favor of defending THE RING light heavyweight championship, Taylor has become an important player in the 168-pound class.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN



in the war over Calzaghe's old turf.

While there's nothing more disheartening than the vacancy sign at the top of THE RING ratings, it's not as if Calzaghe's exit creates a gigantic chasm that no one can fill. True, Calzaghe was a long-reigning WBO titlist, and was THE RING champion since 2006, but his 46-0 (32) record does reveal an unfortunate truth about Calzaghe. In the United States, Calzaghe's much-anticipated showdown with Mikkel Kessler had one of the lowest ratings ever for a primetime HBO *World Championship Boxing* telecast. The pay-per-view with Jones was also a disappointment as far as buys. Blame the economy if you will, or the fact that Jones is over the hill, but some of the blame goes to Calzaghe who, despite his obvious talents, has never quite clicked with American fans.

There are a number of super middleweights currently ranked by THE RING who will carry on in Calzaghe's wake. It's not a particularly stellar group, but it's a good mix of new faces, fighters who have been around the block once, and one or two blue-chippers who have a chance to pick up where Calzaghe left off.

Denmark's Kessler, holder of the WBA belt, is in the third category. He's scored a pair of knockouts since losing to Calzaghe in 2007, the victims being Dimitri Sartison (KO 12) and Danilo Haussler (KO 3). Kessler is a skilled, strong fighter who is not yet 30, and his style may be more American-TV friendly than Calzaghe's. Losing to Calzaghe didn't appear to destroy his confidence, and the general consensus is that Kessler remains the man to beat at 168. The only drawback for Kessler is that it just never gets any easier for non-American fighters to win over American viewers. Still, he and Taylor may be destined to meet, and they'd put on a good, competitive bout.

Just two days before the Taylor-Lacy contest, Sakio Bika was in Peter Manfredo's hometown of

Kessler attacks Calzaghe during their November 2007 bout in Cardiff, Wales. Although Calzaghe won a unanimous decision, the Dane gave him his toughest fight at super middleweight, and is in an excellent position to become the new champion.

PHOTO BY JOHN GICHIGI/GETTY IMAGES

Bika strengthened his standing among super middleweight contenders with a third-round TKO of Manfredo in mid-November. "The Scorpion" has already lost a couple of title fights, but remains a dangerous opponent for anybody in the 168-pound division.

PHOTO BY EMILY HARNEY/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Providence, Rhode Island, handing the scrappy Italian-American a third-round TKO loss. It's difficult to get a bead on Bika's talent. He's lost bouts to Calzaghe and Lucian Bute, but he gave both fighters a rough evening. The word after those bouts was that Bika was "awkward," the bromide of choice when an unheralded fighter forces a star to work for his money. But maybe Bika's not awkward; maybe he's just a good, tough fighter. He'll butt heads, he'll hit you when you're down, and he'll walk through fire to

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

It looked like Andrade had scored a spectacular final-round knockout when he challenged Bute for the IBF strap, but referee Marlon Wright's controversial long count saved the belt for the local hero.

get what he wants. It may be our imagination, but Bika seems to have sharpened up his skills since those bouts with Calzaghe and Bute. One bout we'd like to see is Bika versus Librado Andrade. Just thinking about that one can loosen a man's teeth.

Andrade is the division's packhorse, a cement-headed pug who willingly takes five punches to land one. Andrade came very close to winning an alphabet title last October when he went to Montreal to face hometown favorite and IBF titleholder Bute. Bute controlled the action for 11 rounds, but with only seconds to go in the 12th, he found himself tottering around the ring with Andrade in hungry pursuit. Andrade eventually clocked Bute with a right hand that sent the Canadian-Romanian to the canvas in a big, wet heap. Bute was as close to being knocked out as a fighter can be, but thanks to one of the longest counts since Gene Tunney sat in a Chicago ring many years ago staring vacantly at referee Dave Barry, Bute lived to wear the IBF belt another day. It was a bad break for Andrade, but it increased his standing as one of the division's key players.

Remove the final round of the Andrade bout, and Bute looked just as good, if not better, than Kessler did when he fought Andrade in 2007. But Bute tired badly in the late rounds, and once Andrade turned up the heat, Bute was helpless. What would we like to see from Bute? Either a rematch with Andrade or a bout with Kessler. Unless the ratings change in the interim, the winner of the latter would be recognized by

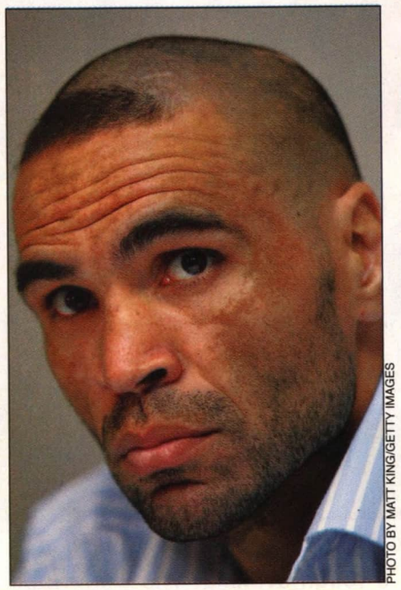


PHOTO BY MATT KING/GETTY IMAGES

Australian Anthony Mundine continues to win, but a loss to Kessler in 2005, in Australia no less, makes it highly unlikely that Mundine would ever rule the division.

THE RING as the new world super middleweight champion.

Can Bute handle Kessler? Bute is a fine, southpaw boxer, but the memory of what Andrade did to him will linger in the air for a while. We'd have to pick Kessler over Bute at this point. Bute might win a few rounds, but Kessler's durability would probably prevail.

Australia's Anthony Mundine, a two-time alphabet titlist at 168, has been rated in THE RING's top 10 for many years and is a headline magnet in his home country. After having his career put on hold by a dangerous eye infection in 2007, he was busy in 2008, fighting four times. But

Undefeated Russian Denis Inkin punishes Fulgencio Zuniga with a right hand during their September 2008 bout in Hamburg, Germany. Inkin has compiled an impressive record, but has yet to face any of the other contenders in THE RING's top 10.

PHOTO BY STUART FRANKLIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

considering he's been beaten already by Kessler, and was even kayoed by the feather-fisted Sven Ottke, it would be hard to take Mundine seriously as threat to win the world title.

There are some young bloods who might make noise in the 168-pound class, not that they'll headline at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas anytime soon. For instance, Denis Inkin, an undefeated Russian by way of Germany, recently outpointed Fulgencio Zuniga to claim the vacant WBO title. By the time this issue is in your hands, England's Carl Froch will have faced Canada's Jean Pascal for the vacant WBC title. What Froch, Pascal, and Inkin have in common is that they haven't been beaten by Calzaghe, Bute, or Kessler.

The non-televised undercard of Taylor-Lacy saw Allen Green score a seventh-round TKO over veteran Carl Daniels. Green is a dark horse at super middleweight. He has only lost once in 28 fights, a decision defeat to Edison Miranda in March 2007. He looked bad that night, timid in the face of Miranda's powerful blows, but Green is usually an exciting fighter and has provided ESPN with a number of highlight reel knockouts.

Miranda, too, is a wild card at 168. He's been kayoed twice in his last four bouts, but he's a scary puncher with a loud personality. Fighters such as Miranda will always be entertaining because you know someone is going home with a headache. At the risk of sounding sadistic, we wouldn't mind seeing Miranda get in the ring with Bika or Andrade. (The health of these fighters is not a concern when we're having fantasy matchups. Thank you.)

Then there's Lacy. He once possessed the division's best blasting equipment, but after being undressed by Calzaghe in 2006, he seemed to lose more than his undefeated streak. Surgery on his left shoulder was needed later that year, but apparently the entire arm was amputated, because there was no sign

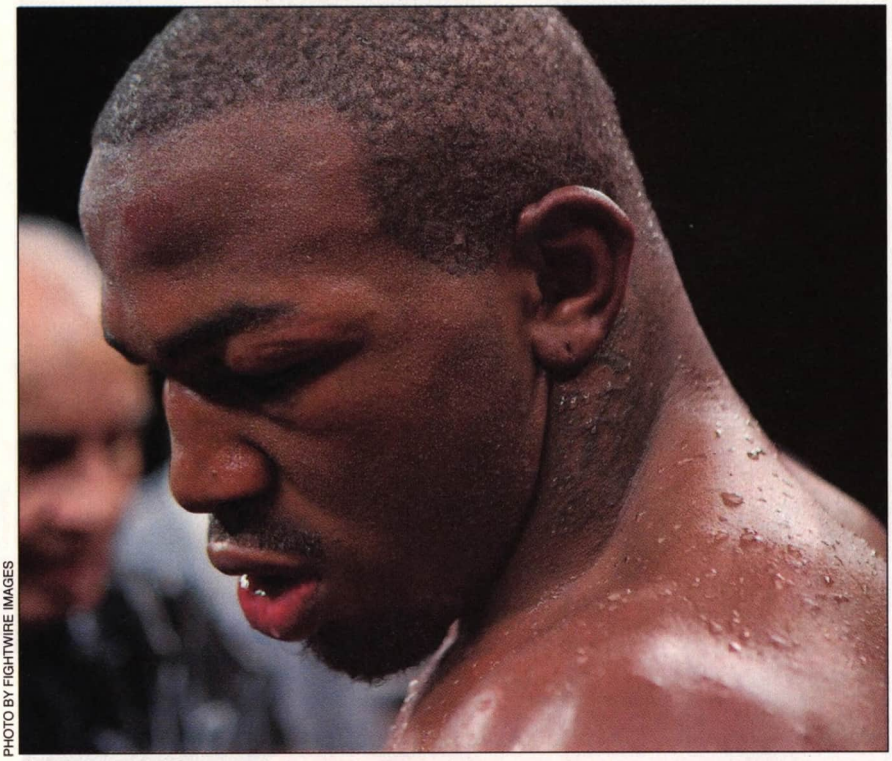


PHOTO BY FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Lacy has every right to look despondent following his loss to Taylor. He's never really recovered from the pasting he took from Calzaghe or the shoulder injury he suffered in his fight with Vitali Tsypko in 2006.

of it against Taylor. Now Lacy seems to do little more than bull his way in and take a lot of shots to the head. His previous opponent, Epifanio Mendoza, had him out on his feet during their bout, won by Lacy on a dubious majority decision. Lacy actually announced his retirement after that bout but changed his mind. Now, if Lacy seems a burned out case at 31, there's a 43-year-old out there who seems reborn.

Bernard Hopkins weighed 170 for his recent win over Kelly Pavlik, and if the money was right, we're certain he'd get down to 168 to become the super middleweight *bete noir*. The logical bouts for Hopkins would be against Kessler or a third go with Taylor.

Kessler currently lacks the star wattage to lure Hopkins into action, but if Kessler should emerge as THE RING's 168-pound champion, that might be enough incentive for Hopkins to shed two pounds and make the challenge. Hopkins already

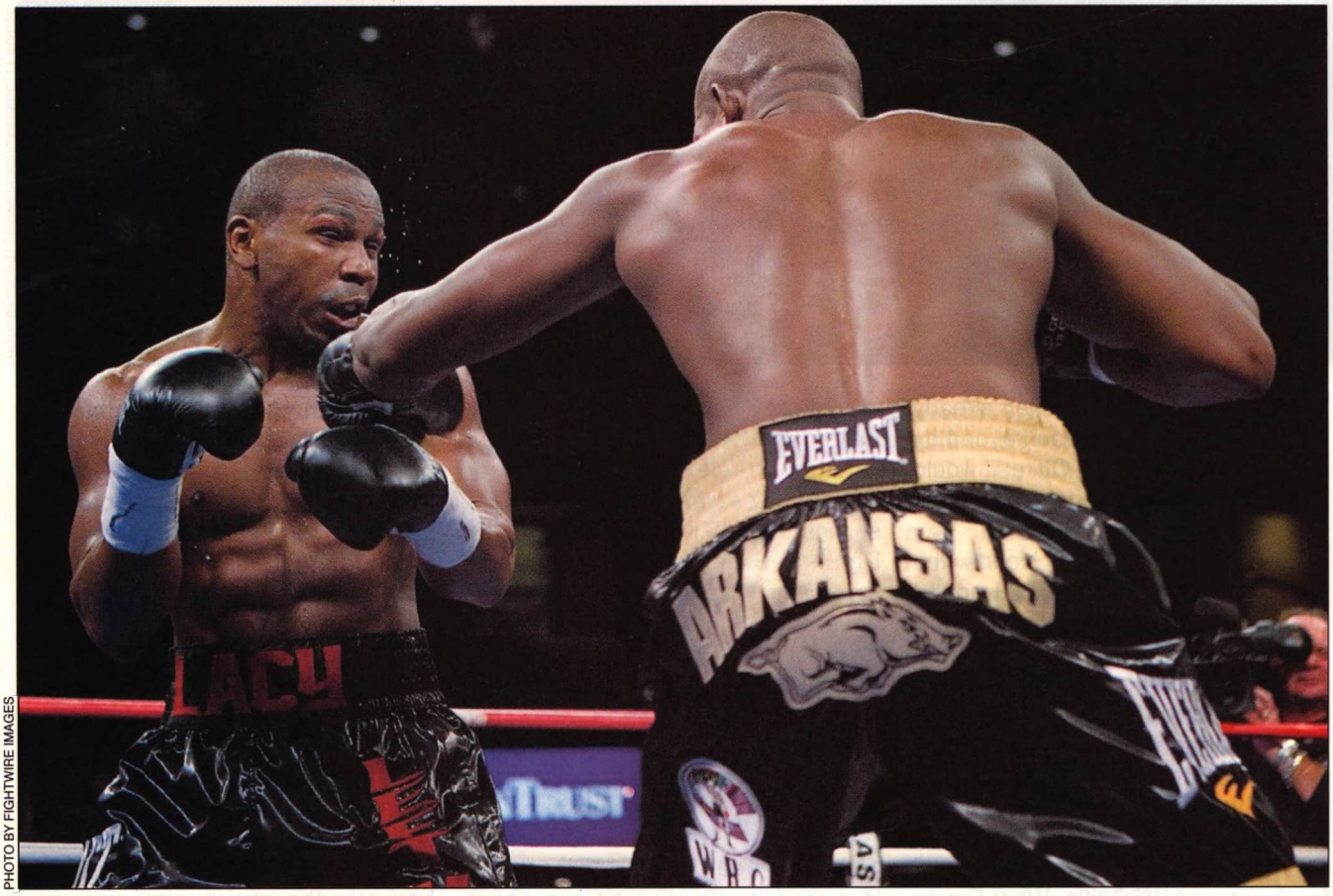


PHOTO BY FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Taylor seemed to rediscover his left jab in the Lacy fight, a potent weapon that has been missing from his arsenal in recent outings. Whether this was because Lacy was an easy target or because Taylor is back in the groove remains to be seen.

has won world championships at 160 and 175. Winning the laurels at 168 would motivate Hopkins, if his already jam-packed resume could stand it.

As for Hopkins-Taylor III, the ageless wonder might like a chance to set things right after being nudged out of two decisions by Taylor. Would a third bout be any different? Upon beating Pavlik, Hopkins said he's going for knockouts now; in another close bout with Taylor, a more aggressive Hopkins might tip the scorecards his way. Of course, it's unrealistic to expect Hopkins to continue much longer, but he's fooled us before. Taylor, too, might want to get rid of the old man, once and for all.

Against Lacy, Taylor showed some of the skills that once had HBO touting him as the game's newest sensation, namely, the double-pump jab and some good old Arkansas toughness. But he also showed the same flaws: His right hand is still launched Hail Mary style with no thought to its destination, and he can't follow up when he has a guy in trouble.

During the early rounds, Taylor, 28-2-1 (17), stunned Lacy with hard shots to the head and ribcage, and it looked as if Taylor might score a kayo. Lacy, 24-2 (17), battled back in the fifth, but when one of his thudding shots put Taylor on the canvas, referee Lawrence Cole ruled it a slip. Taylor remained calm and by the eighth he was easily handling Lacy's clumsy lunges, and countering with jabs and uppercuts.

Much was made of Taylor and Lacy being pals and former Olympic teammates, but if there was an advantage to be had from their relationship, it was clearly Taylor's, for he fought with the ease and confidence of someone who knew exactly what to expect from his opponent. Lacy never stopped trying, but wading in with his head down was ineffective, as Taylor would simply hold him and ride out the storm. The strategy was good enough to earn Taylor the verdict on all three scorecards. Judges Oren Schellenberger and Gale Van Hoy submitted scores of 119-109, while Joseph Pasquale saw it 118-110, all for Taylor.

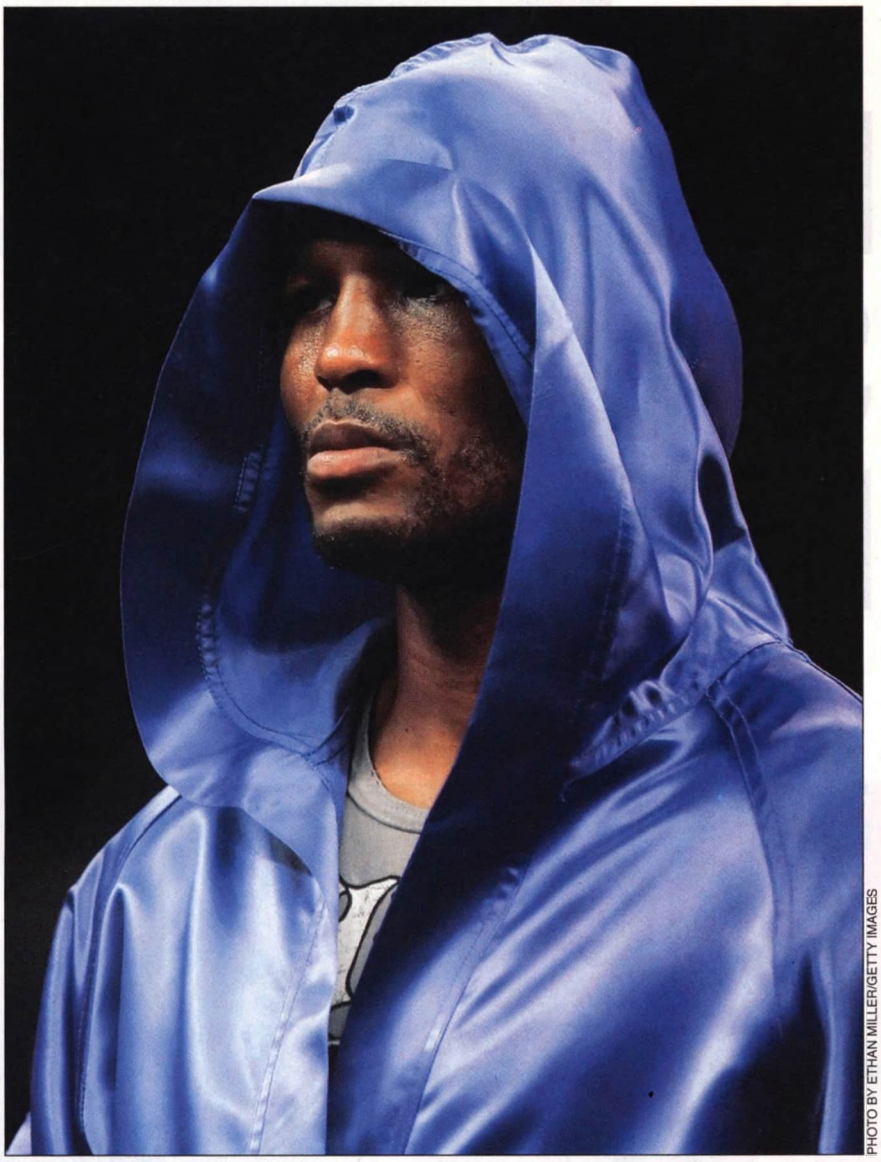


PHOTO BY ETHAN MILLER/GETTY IMAGES

Wildcard: Former middleweight and light heavyweight champion Hopkins weighed only 170 pounds for his victory over Pavlik. Would he be tempted to shed two pounds and challenge for the super middleweight championship?

"This is the best I ever felt after a fight," Taylor said. "I am so proud of myself, not like in the Kelly fights, where I half-assed it. A couple of times I had [Lacy] hurt, but I couldn't get him out of there. He's a tough kid—and a friend."

Because of HBO's fascination with him, Taylor will be a big part of the new super middleweight era. But if we look into Taylor's future, all we see is a repeat of his past: He'll frustrate us with his flaws, and then, perhaps after winning an alphabet belt, he'll be kayoed again.

Meanwhile, the 168-pound class will hang up a sign reading "Pardon Our Appearance While Under Reconstruction." If good fights are made, the division will hold up, and Calzaghe's departure will not be noticed. If the good bouts don't happen or get sideswiped by alphabet politics, we may start pining for the "Pride Of Wales." Sometimes you don't realize what you have until it's gone. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer from Massachusetts and a regular contributor to THE RING.

Darchinyan Stuns Mijares And The Experts

Why Boxing Prognosticators Can't Get Things Right

By Ivan Goldman

Fight writers were grumpy when they settled in to watch Cristian Mijares box rings around Vic Darchinyan. At least that's what most of them predicted. Intermittent rain had killed a power cable, so they couldn't plug in their laptops, and only the fighters and a few Showtime aristocrats were under shelter. Fans and writers were surrounded by puddles.

PHOTOS BY JAN SANDERS

Despite predictions to the contrary, Darchinyan fooled most of the professional prognosticators by totally dominating the heavily favored Mijares. The murderous-punching Australian scored two knockdowns en route to a knockout victory and a junior bantam alphabet strap.

Beginning with round one, Darchinyan, largely considered an overconfident, egomaniacal goofball on a downward slide, had the number-one-ranked junior bantamweight flustered and on the back-move. The Australian by way of Armenia took the fight to him like a master with facile demolition in his fists.

By the end of the opening round, Mijares, his prefight smirk gone, had already been down once, and the surprisingly hard-to-hit Darchinyan meted out a steady barrage of quick, thundering shots that had his much-praised opponent in shock and pain round after round until finally a two-punch combination put him down for good in the ninth. Mijares, his face busted up and his body depleted from a ferocious, ongoing attack to the liver and other tender organs, lay flat on his back waiting for the world to refocus. His next victory would have to come some other night.

The experts weren't just wrong on this one. Wrong is when the predicted winner gets caught with a lucky shot or is edged out in a close contest. This was a one-sided beating that lasted most of every round. "I don't think Darchinyan missed a left hook for the entire fight," said Pat Russell, one of the judges.

It was also one of a recent series of startling upsets that had analysts wondering how much they really knew about the Sweet Science after all. Bernard Hopkins dealt previously undefeated hard-charger Kelly Pavlik a humiliating loss, the barely known Sergio Martinez turned out be a master of both offense and defense, forcing the much-vaunted, overwhelmed Alex Bunema to quit on his stool, and lightweight sensation Amir Khan, who seemed to think he already owned his division by divine right, was kayoed in the first round by Colombian nobody Breidis Prescott.

If experts are so expert, why were so many of them getting it wrong? A Showtime poll showed 34 percent of fans predicted Darchinyan would score a knockout, but only six in 32 experts picked him to win at all. How come fans know so much more than people paid to know something?

Among those few experts who did get it right was Joe Calzaghe's father and trainer, Enzo Calzaghe. He saw Pavlik as easy prey for the crafty Hopkins and said so. But there are plenty of ways to go wrong, and lately it seems experts are finding all of them.

Styles Make Fights: This is a cliché that, although true, is neither terribly precise nor descriptive. But

Darchinyan: Better In Every Way

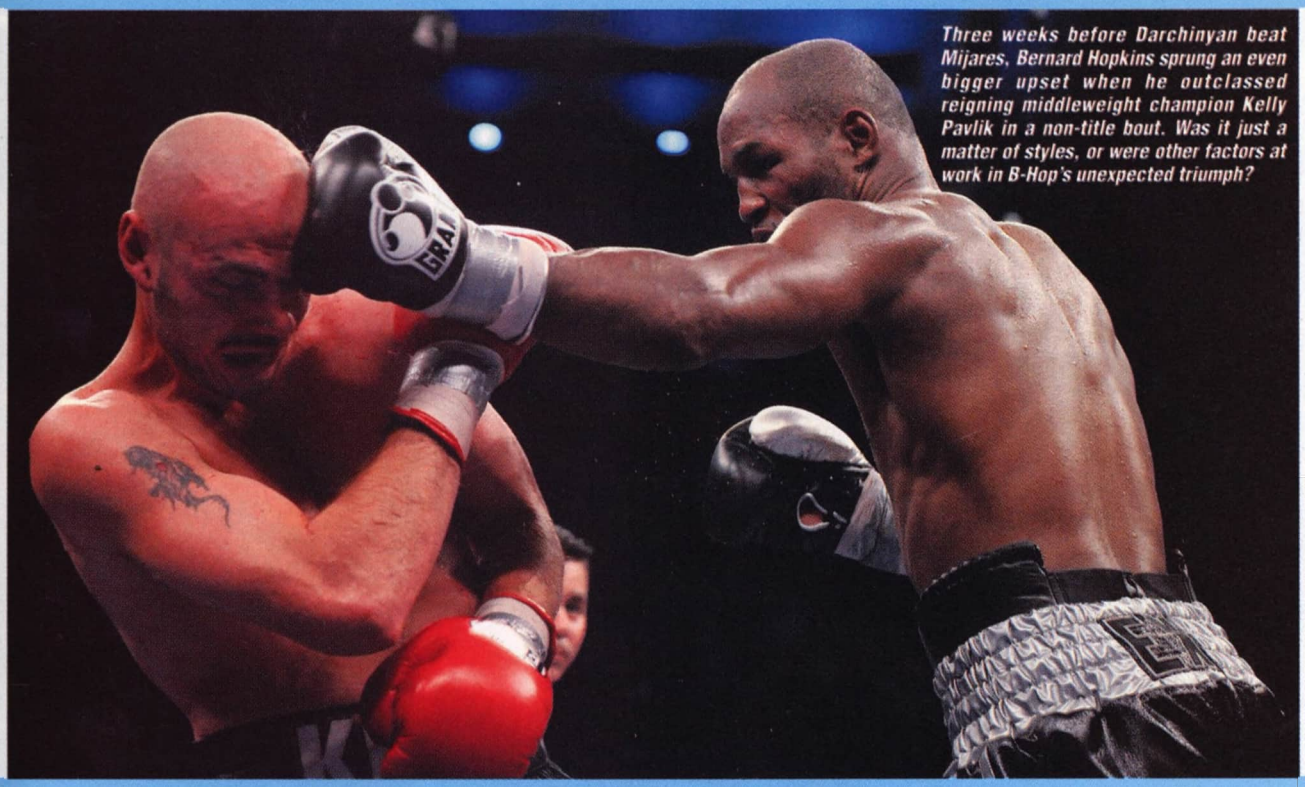
Vic Darchinyan, 31-1-1 (25), last competed at The Home Depot Center on March 3, 2007, when he battered Victor Burgos until the referee finally stopped the vicious beating in the 12th round. Moments later, Burgos slid into a coma and was rushed to the hospital for brain surgery. He's still recovering. But southpaw Darchinyan had been unimpressive. He'd pursued his feather-punching quarry all night in what looked like a wrestler's crouch, throwing wild lefts and showing little finesse. Later, Nonito Donaire kayoed Darchinyan in a fifth-round shocker, and his stock dipped again when he pulled out only a draw against Z Gorres.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Darchinyan hammers home a right

The crafty Cristian Mijares, 36-4-2 (15), was, at 27, considered at the top of his game and near the top of the sport. Among his victims were the respected Jorge Arce and Jose Navarro. But instead of easily outsmarting and outfighting a one-dimensional Darchinyan, southpaw Mijares found himself across from a quicker fighter who threw blazing shots with mean intentions out of a tight envelope, and he counterpunched like Johnny Tapia in his prime. Mijares' normally beautiful jab rarely got there.

Against a punishing counterpuncher, opponents, though they might not even notice it, don't throw many punches, and that's what happened to Mijares. But the stronger Darchinyan didn't just counterpunch. He put on pressure, and Mijares had few answers.



Three weeks before Darchinyan beat Mijares, Bernard Hopkins sprung an even bigger upset when he outclassed reigning middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik in a non-title bout. Was it just a matter of styles, or were other factors at work in B-Hop's unexpected triumph?

PHOTO BY JEFF ZELEVANSKY/GETTY IMAGES

Mijares went down in the first round and made it close in rounds four and seven. The others looked the same. All Darchinyan. "In the seventh," said Pat Russell, one of the judges, "I frankly thought Darchinyan was taking a breather from hitting the guy. Darchinyan is a slick fighter."

Finally, in the ninth round, Darchinyan caught the depleted Mijares running backward. He stepped in with a tremendous straight right and an even bigger left. Referee Lou Moret started a count, but thought better of it and waved it off at 3:00. So much for conventional wisdom.

By staging the contest outdoors in Carson, California, the promoters gambled and lost. They were counting on a good representation of both Hispanics and Armenians, but the greatest concentration of Armenians is in Glendale, 30 miles up a rain-slicked freeway. Most watched the fight on Showtime instead. The tennis stadium, built for 8,000, has earned a reputation as skillfully designed venue without one bad seat. But on a rainy night, attendance was a disappointing 3,076.

—I.G.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Now it's Mijares' turn to rebound

What's Next For Vic?

Among experts fooled was Vic Darchinyan's promoter, Gary Shaw. "I didn't want Vic to take this fight," he said. "Mijares is such a tremendous fighter. But my fighter forced me into it."

Said Mijares's promoter, Lou DiBella, to Darchinyan: "You imposed your will." He praised the victor's skill, and, noting his charisma, said, "This guy is very good for boxing."

The gracious Mijares was asked who hit harder, Darchinyan or Katsushige Kawashima, who'd knocked him down in a fight two years earlier. "The answer is this," he replied, pointing to his own busted-up face. "You don't have to make a guess."

Asked whether he wanted a rematch, Mijares said yes, adding, "I'm going to ask Vic not to hit me so hard next time."

His victory vaulted Darchinyan to the number-one spot in THE RING's 115-pound ratings. Mijares slipped from one to three, beneath Darchinyan and Fernando Montiel. With this victory, Darchinyan owned all three major alphabet belts. If he defeats Montiel, he'll be THE RING champion. Mijares, who'd been ranked at eight in pound-for-pound, was moved off that list.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Is junior feather champ Vazquez in Darchinyan's future?

It wasn't clear what moves the two fighters would make next. Traditionally, the victim of such a thrashing takes a tune-up to remind himself he's still a skilled fighter. Darchinyan, who'd been campaigning at flyweight only a year earlier, was talking about moving up two more weight classes to take on THE RING's junior featherweight champion Israel Vazquez. Shaw didn't appear eager, but Vazquez, who'd heard this challenge before, braved the rain to watch the fight unfold in person.

—I.G.

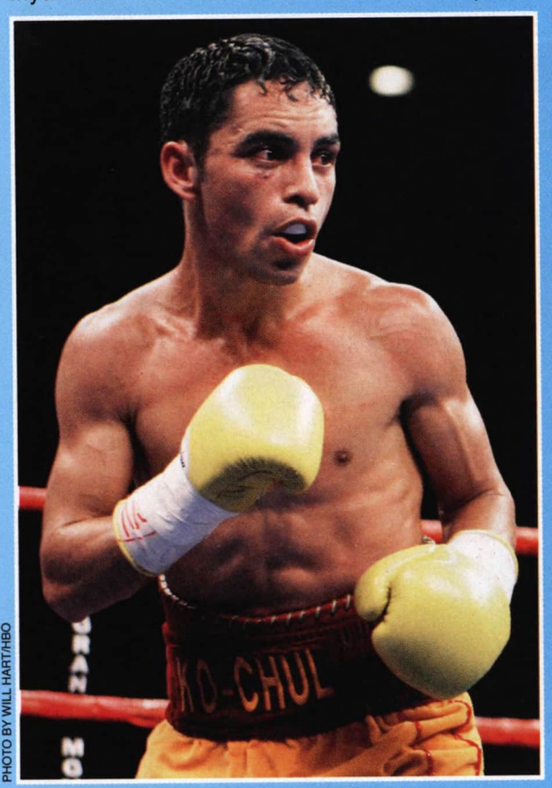
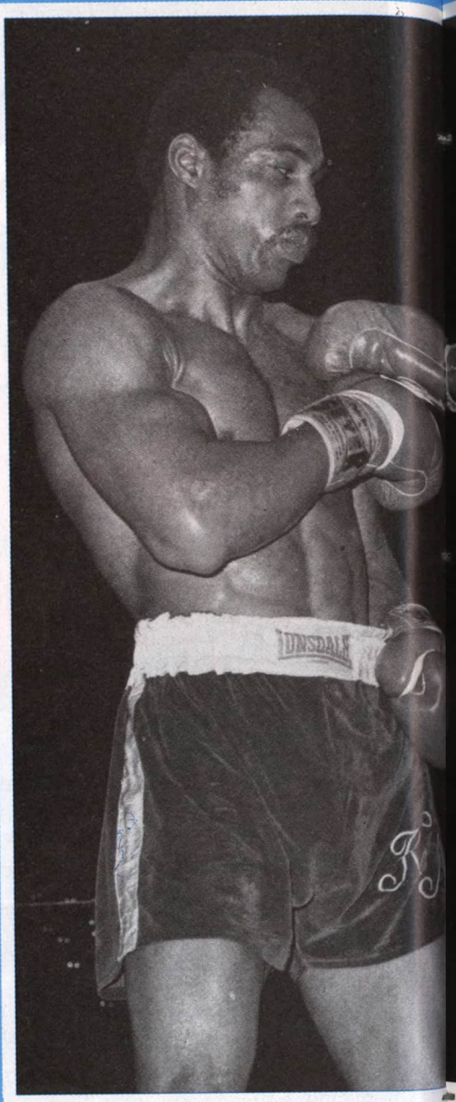


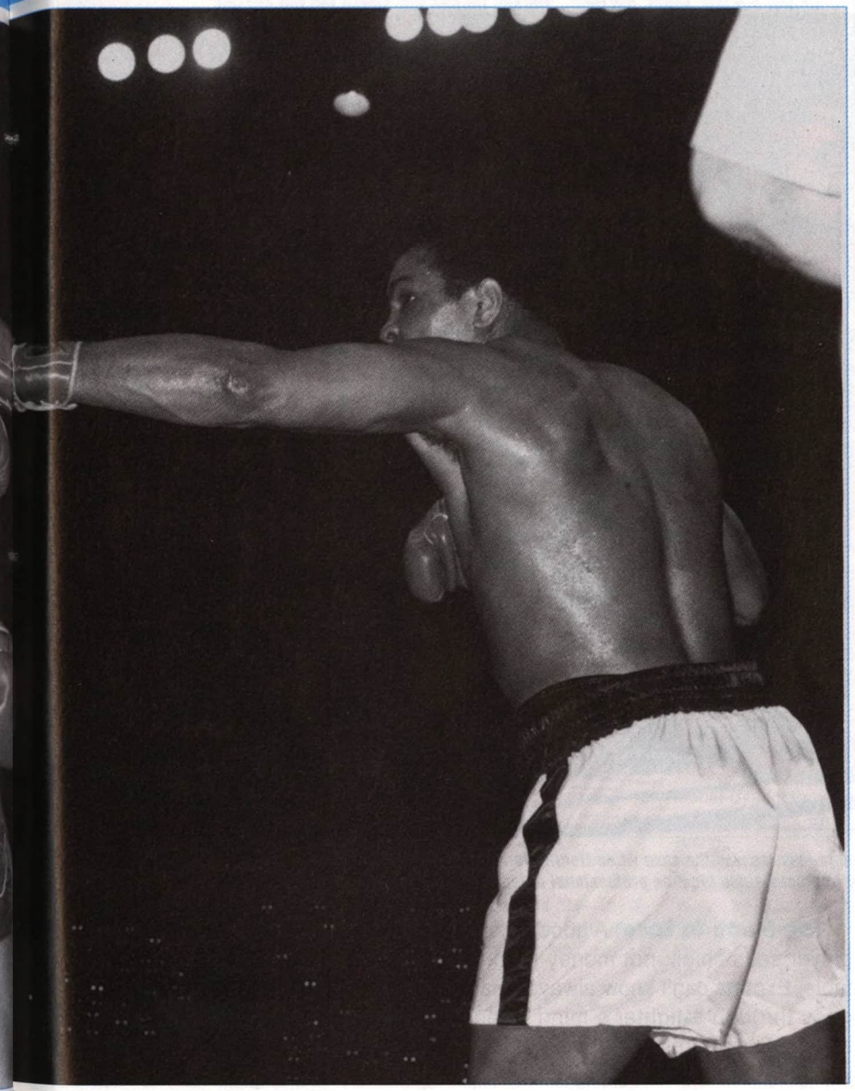
PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

A match with Montiel would crown a new RING champ



Thanks to trainer Eddie Futch, Ken Norton knew when Muhammad Ali was going to throw the left jab. Armed with this knowledge, Norton came extremely close to beating "The Greatest" three times, even though he only got the verdict once.

fans hear it repeated over and over by analysts trying to explain why Fighter A beats Fighter B and Fighter B beats fighter C, but fighter A can't beat fighter C. That is, Pavlik beats Jermain Taylor twice, and Taylor beats Hopkins twice, but Pavlik can't even come close to defeating Hopkins once. In fact, he stumbles around in the ring like a terrier who's learned too late of the mighty difference between a house cat and a tiger out of Philadelphia, and that maybe it wasn't such a good idea after all to take this particular tail between his teeth.



Some fighters are just made for certain opponents who run over the rest of the opposition until they come up against a guy—maybe the only guy—who has their number. Vernon Forrest runs over Shane Mosley in two back-to-back contests, but Ricardo Mayorga does the same to Forrest. Then, when Mayorga takes on Mosley, he gets flattened. Happens over and over. It's part of what makes this science so sweet.

Ken Norton was a good but not great heavyweight. Muhammad Ali *was* a great heavyweight. In three bouts against Norton, Ali came away with two disputed victories and a loss. Plenty of those who were ringside contend Ali's reputation had more to do with those two wins than what transpired in the ring.

Exceptional Trainers: Years later, it came out that trainer Eddie Futch noticed a muscle in Ali's shoulder would twitch a split second before he threw his picture-perfect jab. Futch decided that Norton had just the tools to take advantage. He had an excellent jab and was a fearless ex-Marine who knew how to follow orders. When the muscle twitched, Norton caught what he knew was coming with his right hand, even when he couldn't see it. He also jabbed and stepped in with his jab, wrecking whatever combination Ali had been planning to throw behind the jab. The result? A frustrated Ali who looked almost like another fighter in there, particularly after Norton broke his jaw during the first fight.

It's hard for experts to know which trainers are for real unless they get and take advantage of gym access that doesn't always exist when world-class fighters train for a fight. You have to ask yourself, for example, if Enzo Calzaghe could see how Pavlik would match up against Hopkins, what else did he see and *use* as he prepared his son for Hopkins? Maybe plenty.

A really fine trainer can make sure his fighter has a firm foundation and teach him plenty of tricks besides. He can size up the strengths and weaknesses of both fighters, tailor appropriate tactics, switch plans in the corner when it's called for, and motivate his fighter when it's required. When a trainer can do all that, yes, he can make a difference.

Intensity: It's easy for a fighter who trained hard to believe his intensity is superior to his opponent's—until he gets hit. If he's getting tagged from unexpected angles by shots thrown with unexpected speed that land with unusual force, it's then that he learns whether his intensity was garden variety or the superhuman kind that Israel Vazquez and Rafael Marquez summon every time they're in the ring together. Did Mijares, Pavlik, Bunema, and Khan have outstanding intensity when things went sour? You be the judge. But when experts never saw a particular fighter in serious trouble, they don't know the whole story.

Shock: A fighter is more susceptible to a shock when his camp goes through all the motions and everyone's working just as hard as ever, but there's also a general feeling that the fighter is preparing to beat someone up, as opposed to tangling with an opponent who can call on outstanding skills. You get the feeling that Amir Khan's camp had elements of a pre-coronation party before each and every one of his fights. You want your fighter to be confident, but step over the fine line and overconfidence can do him in.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

It is often unwise to write off a fighter following a single loss, as was the case when Nonito Donaire blasted out Darchinyan in July 2007 (pictured). The Mijares win proved that Darchinyan has significantly improved since his lone professional defeat.

In retrospect, Mijares' smirk was a telltale sign. He knew Darchinyan had unusual power but figured he was clumsy and easy to hit. Discovering the reality shocked him. Conversely, the element of surprise can work against a fighter when he thinks he's planning one and it doesn't work very well. The shock element works against analysts as well as fighters.

Unfamiliarity: Just because you never heard of him doesn't mean he can't win. Any "expert" who's never seen the opponent compete but predicts victory over someone like Prescott, who was undefeated, or Martinez, who had only one loss in 45 contests, is no expert at all. Prescott fought mostly in Colombia and Martinez in Argentina. How many analysts had really seen them in action? In the case of Prescott, the most fooled expert of all was Khan's promoter, Frank Warren, who put the contest on pay-per-view to beef up bank statements on the way to the Hall of Fame. But he forgot to tell Prescott.

Too Much To Lose: A good poker player sees chips, not money on the table. Experts can't know always what goes through a fighter's mind when he meets adversity, but if he starts worrying about making payments on his BMW, he could be in trouble.

Nothing To Lose: An opponent who's been counted out by everyone before he climbs the steps can be a dangerous beast. Example: Buster Douglas against Mike Tyson.

Too Young Or Too Old: Sometimes inexperience can work in a fighter's favor. He might, like Prescott, not know how to lose, so he doesn't. Darchinyan was 32—quite old for a little guy, and Hopkins was a whopping 43, old at any weight. When aging fighters show defects, experts figure they're ready for the junk heap. Maybe. Maybe not.

One Fight Says It All: Not! "Sometimes," pointed out Russell, "a guy can't get it uncranked on a particular night. Don't throw his career out over it." Darchinyan was defined by his one loss, against Nonito Donaire. But it made him a better fighter. Now he's defined by his victory over Mijares, and Mijares is defined by his one loss, against Darchinyan. None of that makes sense, but it's what happens.

Bandwagons: This may be the most important reason they get it wrong. Everyone else is saying it, so it must be true, right? And it makes life so much easier for an "expert" when, instead of having to think, he just gets in line with the other lemmings.

But flummoxed experts are part of what makes the sport great. If everyone always knew what was going to happen, why would anyone watch? ■

Ivan Goldman, The Ring's West Coast correspondent, was ringside in Carson, California, for the Darchinyan-Mijares fight.

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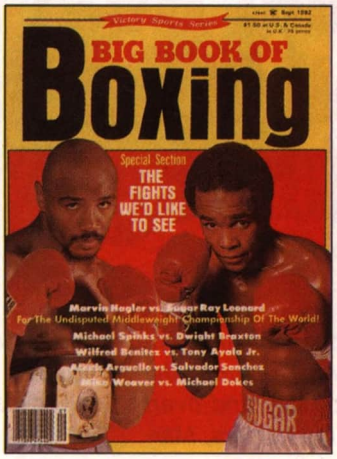

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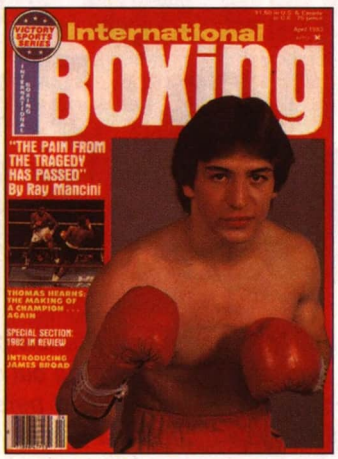

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Juan Manuel Marquez

"It Makes Me Feel Real Proud When They Tell Me That I'm Mexico's Champion"

Juan Manuel Marquez has finally arrived. After enduring numerous setbacks, the 35-year-old boxing wizard has almost reached the sport's highest plateau at an age when most fighters are either retired or barely hanging on. In winning THE RING lightweight championship of the world with a stunning knockout victory of Joel Casamayor, Marquez strengthened his position as one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world and convinced even the most cynical observers that he belongs among the true greats of the era.

Like fellow old-timer Bernard Hopkins, Marquez rebelled against the system and bucked some of the sport's most powerful powerbrokers. And because of that, it took longer than it should have for his career achievements to coincide with his phenomenal talent. Today, Marquez, 49-4-1 (36), seems at ease with his place in the sport and feels as though there is only one more thing he needs to do in order to be totally fulfilled—score a resounding victory over Manny Pacquiao, with whom he has fought a draw and lost a narrow decision.

The oldest son of a former pro fighter, Juan Manuel and younger brother Rafael have been a credit to the sport, never hesitating to take on the best possible opposition and generally coming out on top. Lacking the exaggerated personality and overt charisma of many top fighters, Marquez has earned his lofty status inside the ring, a place where skill and courage mean far more than words and braggadocio.

On a Friday afternoon in mid-November, THE RING's bilingual correspondent, Brent Matteo Alderson, visited the offices of Golden Boy Promotions in downtown Los Angeles and sat down with Marquez for the most extensive interview the fighter has ever conducted with the English-language media. Alderson reports:

"Juan Manuel's career is a story of persecution and triumph, and compares favorably to some of the greatest stories in boxing's long history. From losing his pro debut to being unjustly stripped of titles he won in the ring, his recent success and career resurrection in the face of substantial adversity is indeed inspiring."

The Ring: Belated congratulations on your victory over Joel Casamayor.

Juan Manuel Marquez: Thank you. I'm very happy to have won the title at 135. Before the fight I was elated about the prospect of winning THE RING belt. I wasn't able to do it at 130 pounds with the fight I had with Pacquiao. They took it from us. But I finally did at 135.

The Ring: Do you feel strong at 135 pounds?

JMM: I feel real good. That was the first time I fought at the weight, and Casamayor had never been knocked out and he had taken part in various bouts at the weight.

The Ring: Tell us about your childhood. How was it growing up in Mexico City?

JMM: I come from a humble background, from a poor neighborhood. That's where I grew up and that's where I learned about life. When I was growing up, I was always thinking about how I was going to get out of poverty, and I dedicated myself to my training regimen and to my studies. Thank God, up to now, the hard work and dedication that came from that mindset has paid off.

The Ring: How tough was your neighborhood?

JMM: It was a tough neighborhood in regards to the gangs and the criminals, but I knew all the people in the gangs, and they always respected us for not getting into trouble. We knew everyone and they never caused us any problems.

The Ring: Do you still live Mexico City?

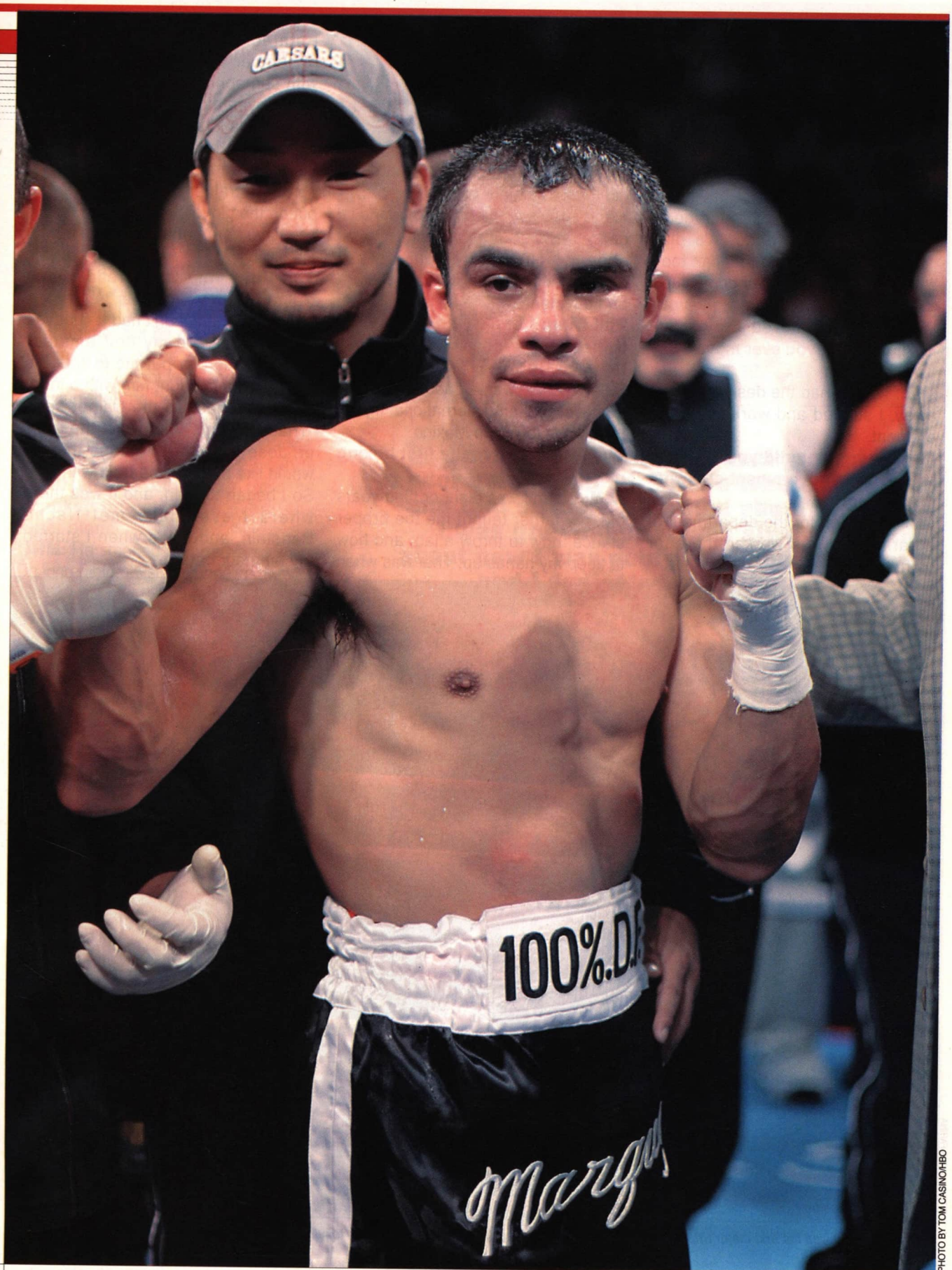

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

JMM: Yes, I live in the Federal District and we go out of the city to train in Toluca. It's about an hour-and-a-half to two hours away driving.

The Ring: Do you still spend time with friends from the old neighborhood?

JMM: We still have a lot of friends there. We keep up with everybody, we're still good friends. We play games in the streets, American football and soccer, whatever comes up.

The Ring: As a young man, your brother, Rafael, moved away to live in Tijuana. Did you ever move away from home?

JMM: I never had the desire to move away. I studied and worked in government.

The Ring: When did you work for the Mexican government and what did you do?

JMM: I worked for the department of agrarian reform. I worked there for eight years.

The Ring: Were you fighting professionally at the time?

JMM: Fighting, training, and working. From 1988 to 1996, I worked and I trained. I worked in the accounting branch and did all the accounting of all the work that the subcontractors did to maintain our branch of government. Let's say the offices needed to get painted or other work had to be done for maintenance purposes. I had to keep track of all the receipts and payments.

The Ring: I understand that your father was also a professional fighter.

JMM: Yes. He was a good fighter, but he never had any international fights. He always fought in Mexico.

The Ring: What is the first boxing memory you have?

JMM: When I was eight or nine years old, my father taught me the proper stance, how to throw a jab, and how to keep my hands up. That was when I stated to train. The first time I remember that I put the gloves on with someone was near school in a public gym, a community sports center where a lot of people went to play soccer and basketball. I saw some other boys training there and I went up to the trainer and said, "I want to put on the gloves with the best fighter you have here," and he put me in with his brother.

The Ring: Had you already been training with your father?

JMM: Yes, but I hadn't had a fight yet. This was before my first amateur bout. So the guy put me in with his brother and I caught him with a lot of good punches, so the trainer said, "That's enough." Afterward, the trainer, Jose Luis Lara, told me that he would like me to come train with him. So I began to train, and it was there where I eventually met Nacho Beristain, and that's when I started my amateur career.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Marquez finally won his first major title in February 2003 when he knocked out Manuel Medina to win the vacant IBF featherweight strap.

The Ring: Did you ever have the opportunity to spar with any famous fighters?

JMM: When I first started to train seriously, after I had already had some amateur fights and was training to be a professional, I went to the gym one day and Nacho Beristain said, "You're going to box with Daniel Zaragoza!" He put me in with Zaragoza and we went four rounds. I think it was 1990. He was a world champion, and we both won a couple of rounds. It was two to two. I wasn't training for a fight at the time, but he had been in training for a fight, so he was in way better condition. I fought well, and as he was leaving the ring he told Nacho, "He's going to be a world champion!"

The Ring: Zaragoza was an enigma. He was a titleholder at 122 pounds until he was 38, and I read he smoked one cigarette every day after dinner.

JMM: He smoked and he was always in incredible physical condition. Maybe I should smoke *(smiles)*.

The Ring: As an amateur, you won two Golden Gloves titles and only suffered one loss. Tell us about that one loss.

JMM: I entered a special tournament, the Mexican City Invitational. It's a tournament where they only select the best fighters, and I had to face a strong fighter from Tepito.

The Ring: Your brother, Rafael, also mentioned Tepito during his RING interview. What is it about that neighborhood?

JMM: They call it Barrio Bravo because it's full of fighters, everybody there is a fighter. The people from that neighborhood are tough and the boxers are always aggressive and real solid punchers. Anyway, I had to face this kid from Tepito and he was strong. It was only three rounds, but a hard three rounds. I won, but the next day I was scheduled to fight again, and I was beat, tired. I had fought three hard rounds and my muscles were tired, so the next day I lost. I felt weak and slow and I couldn't throw crisp punches. They gave the decision to my rival.

PHOTO BY JOE ESQUIVEL

"I come from a humble background, from a poor neighborhood. That's where I grew up and that's where I learned about life. When I was growing up, I was always thinking about how I was going to get out of poverty, and I dedicated myself to my training regimen and to my studies."

The Ring: You lost your first professional fight to Javier Duran, who finished his career with a 4-14-2 record. What happened?

JMM: I was disqualified, but it was because the fighter was affiliated with the doctor working with the commission. In the first round I hit him with a solid shot and cut him. Then, when the second round started, they stopped the fight. I thought I won because he was cut up. Then they declared him the winner by disqualification. They said it was because the cuts had been caused by headbutts, but they were from punches. I felt bad because it was my first fight and I had lost, but I also felt good because I really knew that I had fought well and had beaten him up pretty good.

The Ring: In the 1990s you boxed in Los Angeles under the promotional banner of Forum Boxing. What can you tell us about your experiences during that time?

JMM: I was treated very well. I had a good experience with John Jackson, the promoter, and Tony Curtis, the matchmaker. The only complaint that I have is that they never put me in with Marco Antonio Barrera. He was with them, but they never tried to put that fight together.

The Ring: Did you ask for a Barrera fight?

JMM: Yes, we were ready to fight him and we wanted the fight, but due to financial reasons and the business aspect of the sport, we were never given the opportunity.

The Ring: Were you and Barrera friends?

JMM: We would greet one another cordially, but we weren't friends. I've always said that friendship is something more serious. Doing things together, going out to eat together, and sharing a significant part of someone's life with them. We never had that, it was "How are you?" and that's it.

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The Ring: At the time, you were fighting at 126 pounds and Barrera was fighting 122, so you were a little bigger than him.

JMM: Yes, but I would have dropped four pounds to fight him, but they never offered the fight to me.

The Ring: In the late-1990s you were the WBO's number-one ranked contender and Naseem Hamed's mandatory challenger for a lengthy period of time, but the fight never came off. What happened?

JMM: The WBO changed the rules for him and they did a lot of things that really hurt me. I was waiting for two years to fight Hamed. He was considered the best featherweight in the world during that time, and I was insistent that he take the fight. So we ended up going to Puerto Rico, and the WBO said, "We are going to put this matter up to a vote, we are going to vote to see if Marquez fights Hamed." All the people with the WBO had already been counseled and everybody knew how they were going to vote. They knew they were going to vote against me so that the bout wouldn't come off.

The Ring: Later on in your career you fought and won the WBO title. Were you still angry with the WBO?

JMM: I was very angry with them, very bothered. But this is professional sports, and you have to use your intelligence, so I fought for the organization in 2006 and won their interim championship. Even so, during that time when everything happened I was angry with them.

The Ring: Hamed recently became eligible for induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame. Does he belong in the Hall of Fame?

JMM: He had a difficult style and hit real hard, but I was confident that with the style I had I was going to beat him. Barrera boxed well and he beat

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

After being knocked down three times in the first round, Marquez rallied back to earn a draw in his first fight with Manny Pacquiao. It was a thriller, which Juan Manuel feels he actually deserved to win.

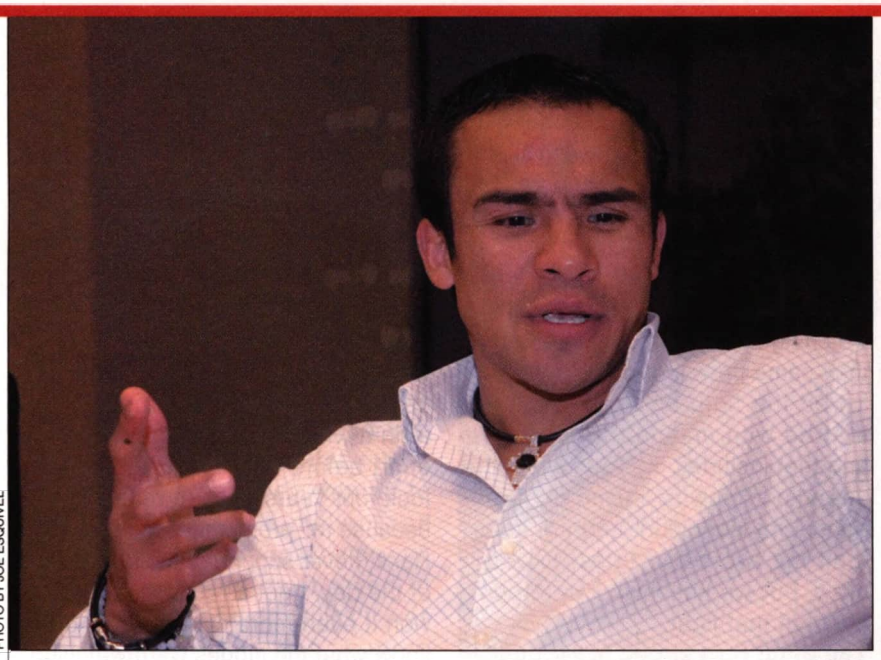

PHOTO BY JOE ESQUIVEL

"The WBO changed the rules for [Hamed] and they did a lot of things that really hurt me. I was waiting for two years to fight Hamed ... the WBO said, 'We are going to put this matter up to a vote, we are going to vote to see if Marquez fights Hamed.' They knew they were going to vote against me, so that the bout wouldn't come off."

him easily. Objectively, I can honestly say that Hamed does not deserve it. You know why? Because if you're the best, you have to prove it by fighting the best. He never fought me, and I'm sure there were some other good fighters that also would have beaten him that he didn't fight.

The Ring: In 1999, you finally got the opportunity to fight for a title, against Freddie Norwood, and you lost a close decision. What are your feelings about that fight?

JMM: I had watched Norwood's fights on video, five or six of them, and he was always very aggressive, moving forward, tracking down his opponent, looking for a fight. Then, when the moment came to fight me, he changed his style. Instead of coming forward, he was going backward. He started to run and there were some things that didn't go my way. In the second or third round, Norwood hit me, but it didn't put me down. He pushed me and tripped me with his foot. You know southpaws and orthodox fighters always get their feet tangled up. So he pushed me with his arm, I tripped, and the referee counted it as a knockdown. Sometime afterward, I landed a three-punch combination and his glove touched the canvas, but they didn't count it. It was a legitimate knockdown. I didn't get that point, and those few points made a big difference.

The Ring: You finally won the IBF featherweight title in 2003.

JMM: It was against Manuel Medina, a very good fighter. He was a world champion five or six times and had a very difficult style. But I knocked him out in seven rounds. I was real hungry and had the desire to be champion,

so I took advantage of the opportunity. I was very happy to achieve my goal, especially in face of the obstacles I had to overcome to get there.

The Ring: In 2004, you had your first fight with Manny Pacquiao, which ended in a draw. What do you recall about that fight?

JMM: When the bell rang to start the fight, I began to hit Pacquiao with some good shots and I immediately thought to myself, *This fight is going to be easy. I'm going to win!* The moment that I finished thinking about how easy the fight was going to be, he connected with a shot and got a lot of confidence. Then he connected with his left. He's real heavy-handed with his left and he sent me to the mat. When he put me down, I was angry because it had been a long time since I had been knocked down. So I was mad and went to exchange with him, and he connected again and I went down again. I was in a desperate situation, and he connected again and put me down for the third time. I got up again, and from that point I won the fight. I don't know what the judges were watching and I don't understand how they came up with a draw. If you followed the fight closely, you'll see that he won maybe three rounds, and that includes the round with the three knockdowns. I used my experience, my condition, and will to defend my two world titles. It was a draw, but we know who was triumphant in that fight.

The Ring: How strong is Pacquiao?

JMM: He's strong! I connected a number of times, and he was buzzed but never went down.

The Ring: How hurt were you in the first round?

JMM: I got up in good shape. I wasn't hurt, but I was mad and I wanted to get him back. That's when he got me.

The Ring: Did you think you would fight him again in the near future?

JMM: I wasn't sure, but the people wanted it. I was bothered by the judges' decision. I worked hard and put forth a winning effort, an exceptional effort before and during the fight. It took four years to get a return match because my promoter at the time, Top Rank, never supported me. At the end of the day, I got a return match and I won it even more clearly. I just don't know what the judges were watching.

The Ring: After some early obsta-

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Marquez tags Barrera with a right en route to a 12-round decision in March 2007. It was a changing of the guard fight that made Juan Manuel Mexico's top fighter and brought more attention to the winner than he'd ever enjoyed before.

cles, it seemed as though your career was going well, but after the Pacquiao fight it seemed like everything unraveled. It was reported that you turned down $750,000 to fight Manny in the return match and then you were stripped of your titles.

JMM: I never rejected that offer. I don't like to talk numbers or about purses, but in the first Pacquiao fight I made $650,000. The fight was controversial, the verdict was controversial, and afterward, HBO and Bob Arum offered a certain amount for the return match. They wanted to pay Pacquiao $1.25-million and Arum going to end up paying me $750,000. I would have loved to have fought, but I didn't think it was right that Top Rank was going to make all the money.

The Ring: Do you think the publicity in regards to rejecting that offer negatively impacted your career?

JMM: We knew that the people who understand the boxing industry would understand why we rejected the offer, and that the people who don't like fighters getting robbed would understand.

The Ring: Afterward, there were some hard feelings between you and Top Rank, and you were stripped of the IBF and WBA featherweight title.

JMM: When I didn't have an immediate return match with Pacquiao, I had to make a mandatory defense against this Thai fighter. So Bob Arum, as my promoter, had to go to this purse bid for the fight and put in his bid. But because I didn't take the return match with Pacquiao, he didn't enter in a bid and they stripped me of the titles. Both organizations stripped me of their titles after all the work and sacrifices that I made.

The Ring: Afterward, you had to go to Indonesia to fight for the title as a challenger for a $50,000 purse.

JMM: $35,000, not $50,000! I wanted to regain my championship. I said to myself, *Let's go to Indonesia and win back my title.* But in Indonesia you just can't knock the guy out, you almost have to kill the guy to win in his country.

PHOTO BY JOE ESQUIVEL

"Because I didn't take the return match with Pacquiao, [Arum] didn't enter in a bid and they stripped me of the titles. Both organizations stripped me of their titles after all the work and sacrifices that I made."

The Ring: Tell us about your fight with Chris John in Indonesia.

JMM: It was very close. It was controversial because I was beating Chris John, knocking the wind out of him, hitting him on the exposed part of the stomach in the legal areas, and John started to complain that it hurt. The referee started to reprimand me, telling me not to hit below the belt, to bring up my punches, telling me that he was going to disqualify me. But they were perfectly legal punches. It started to mess up my concentration. Then, in the 12th round, I was doing well; I hit him and I hurt him. But they saved him by stopping the fight to pick up one of the advertisement banners that was in the ring.

The Ring: How long was the time out?

JMM: For about 15 seconds. Chris John was in bad shape and they saved him. I was about to go after him and finish him, and the referee stopped the fight. After that, John recuperated.

The Ring: John is still undefeated. Is he one of the best pound-for-pound fighters in the world?

JMM: He's a good fighter, but he's undefeated because all of his fights are in Indonesia, which is really advantageous for him.

The Ring: After you originally turned down the second fight with Pacquiao and took the fight with John, a lot of people in the boxing industry were saying, "Nacho Beristain is a good trainer, but he's not a good manager." What are your feelings about that?

JMM: I always approach things in a calm manner and all the decisions that were made were made between me and Nacho. We always sit down and talk. He's not the only one that makes

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the decisions; I do as well. We chose to go and fight in Indonesia for $35,000 and at the end of the day they robbed us, they stole the fight from us. We lost and had to face the consequences. We just talked and came to the conclusion that we had to just keep fighting, keep training, and keep going after it. It was a hard time for me. I was at the point to where I was thinking about retirement.

The Ring: Really?

JMM: Yes, I was going to retire. After having to go through all these different things, from being the mandatory contender for Hamed's title for two years and not getting a title shot, and everything that happened with Top Rank, and how they took my title with a snap of the fingers. But I decided to move forward, and just like the disqualification in my first fight made me stronger, this did as well. I think all the problems helped me get to the level where I'm at now.

The Ring: In 2005, THE RING interviewed Erik Morales in Tijuana and he said that you never made it because you were scared to take risks. Any comment?

JMM: He's a good fighter and during that time we were both signed with Bob Arum. One time I was in the offices of Top Rank discussing business, talking about a return match with Pacquiao, and I said, "I want to fight Erik Morales." And Arum said, "Erik Morales doesn't want to fight you, what do you want me to do, force him to do it? He doesn't want the fight." Arum became flustered because at the time Erik Morales was Arum's star. Erik said that I wasn't at his level and that I still had to do more to earn the right to face him. He knew I was very capable and very formidable and that people wanted to see it, but he never wanted to fight me. Both Erik and his promoter didn't want it.

The Ring: Did you feel like the win over Barrera finally erased the problems of the past?

JMM: Beating a great fighter like Barrera made the people take notice of me. But he said some things he shouldn't have said after our fight. He said they robbed him, he said that I wasn't going to make money at his expense in a rematch. But every fighter has his own way of seeing things.

I've had good fights, big fights before that, so I can't necessarily say that Barrera was the fight that opened all the doors, even though it brought me a lot more recognition. When I signed with Golden Boy, my career changed dramatically. It made

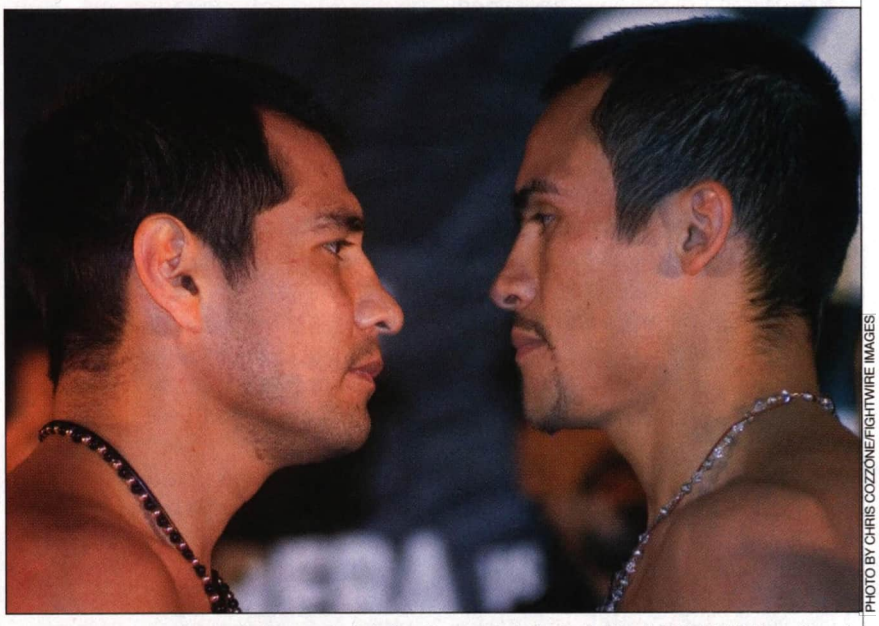


PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Barrera and Marquez go eyeball-to-eyeball during the weigh-in for their March 2007 fight. Even though Barrera was past his prime, the unanimous decision victory earned Marquez a lot of attention.

PHOTO BY JOE ESQUIVEL

"I was going to retire. After having to go through all these different things, from being the mandatory contender for Hamed's title for two years and not getting a title shot, and everything that happened with Top Rank, and how they took my title with a snap of the fingers. But I decided to move forward."

a 180-degree turn. Everything that didn't happen during the course of a five- or six-year period with the other promoters happened with them here at Golden Boy.

The Ring: You fought for Gary Shaw for a short stint before coming to Golden Boy, didn't you?

JMM: I fought one fight with Gary Shaw. I came to Golden Boy and I told them, "I'm interested in fighting for Golden Boy. I like the company and I like how they treat the fighters, but I have a fight coming up with Gary Shaw against Terdsak Jandaeng for the WBO interim title. Let me take care of this fight and then I will be right back here with you guys to sign." And that's what happened.

The Ring: After the second fight with Pacquiao, people were saying that it was a great fight and lot of people were interested in a third bout. But Bob Arum said that he wasn't interested in doing it immediately, that he wanted things to heat up a little bit. How did you feel about that?

JMM: In a way Arum is still obstructing my career with his current fighter Pacquiao, just like he did before with Morales. How could Arum say that the fight needed to heat up a little bit more when it was already hot? The fight broke pay-view-records in that weight class, 400,000 buys. He didn't want me to fight Pacquiao again because he knew that I had won and that I was going to win the third fight even more easily.

The Ring: Well, it was a real close fight and Pacquiao did score a knockdown.

JMM: That was in the third round, and there were still nine rounds left to fight. I connected with more punches,

I cut him, and I had him hurt. I've been to the Philippines and I asked people who they thought won. Every person says it with fear and looks over their shoulder, but I tell them I'm not going to tell anybody, and then they say, "You won."

The Ring: How did you feel when you learned that Manny was going to fight Oscar De La Hoya?

JMM: I was bothered because I moved up to 135 pounds in order to get a third fight with him. But at the end of the day, this is a business, even though I've continued to treat boxing as a sport. I went to Indonesia to fight for $35,000 and I didn't care, and you know why? Because I love the sport. To get a fight with Oscar is good for him, it's good business for the two of them and that's a good thing.

The Ring: Tell us about your fight with Casamayor.

JMM: He was an Olympic champion and a world champion in two different divisions, so I knew it was going to be a difficult fight, a tough fight. But we had to demonstrate that Juan Manuel Marquez is still at the top of his game. I was excited about winning THE RING belt. I had won the other fours titles, the WBO, the IBF, the WBA, and the WBC. THE RING was the only major title I hadn't won. I thought I had won it with Pacquiao, but I had to wait to win it at lightweight.

The Ring: Are you now recognized in Mexico as the country's premier fighter?

JMM: I don't know what to tell you because I haven't taken a survey, but all the people that see me in Mexico tell me, "You're our champion; you're the best fighter we've had here in Mexico since Julio Cesar Chavez." It just makes me feel real proud when they tell me that I'm Mexico's champion.

The Ring: How closely do you follow the sport? Do you like to watch boxing?

JMM: Yah, I like to watch it, but before my father had me watch it and I would fall asleep when I was kid. He wanted me to learn. Now I like to watch it. I like to watch the up-

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMGES

In the biggest victory of his lengthy career, Mexico's Marquez knocked out Cuba's Casamayor in the 11th round of their September 2008 bout at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas, capturing THE RING lightweight championship in the process.

and-coming boxers grow.

The Ring: Did you go to your brother Rafael's fights with Israel Vasquez?

JMM: I didn't go and I haven't been to any of his other fights, because it makes me nervous, it eats away at my nerves.

The Ring: Do you watch them on television?

JMM: Yah, I watch them on television and start sweating. When I watch them, I wish I were there so I could tell him what he has to do. But, of course, it's always easy when you're just watching.

The Ring: What did you think about the Bernard Hopkins-Kelly Pavlik fight?

JMM: Hopkins demonstrated that experience is worth a lot more than youthfulness. That when you get a little older and you prepare yourself well and you're in a big fight, that the experience helps you. And he demonstrated that clearly; he put on a boxing exhibition for all 12 rounds.

The Ring: It's really incredible that Hopkins can do what he does at the age of 43.

JMM: People tell me all the time, "You're getting older; you're 35 years old." Well, people like Hopkins serve as an example of how to keep going forward and how to keep achieving. To be 43 years old and to give a whipping to Pavlik, to be able to give a boxing lesson to a fighter of Pavlik's caliber, an undefeated 26-year-old who had been beating the best fighters out there, is an example of how, if you take care of yourself, the experience will help you and compensate for some other things.

The Ring: How much longer will you fight?

JMM: I don't know. It depends on how much my body can take and how long God allows me to fight.

The Ring: It seems that today's athletes are competing at the elite level at more advanced ages. Why do you think that is?

JMM: They take care of themselves. Not just in this sport, but in all the sports. If you take care of yourself and you know how to eat right, know how to get the correct type of rest, and know how to take care of yourself as in not having any vices, no alcohol, no drugs, you can extend your career as an athlete. I think the athletes now are doing that. Before, I think fighters were in the habit of drinking, they had a lot of vices, they didn't train all the time, and that's why their careers didn't last that long. Nowadays, we take care of ourselves and try to live a healthy life, and that helps us to continue to achieve at a later stage.

PHOTO BY JOE ESQUIVEL

"People tell me all the time, 'You're getting older; you're 35 years old.' Well, people like Hopkins serve as an example of how to keep going forward and how to keep achieving."

The Ring: Who do you think is the best fighter in the history of Mexico?

JMM: Julio Cesar Chavez.

The Ring: Where would you rank yourself?

JMM: I'm not going to say that I'm the best. The people can categorize me.

The Ring: What's next for you? What do you want to do with your career?

JMM: I want to continue to work in this great sport. Maybe teach the up-and-coming guys what they don't know, and promote some fighters too.

The Ring: Just recently at the WBC convention it was reported that Barrera was going to be installed as the mandatory contender for Nate Cambell's 135-pound title, and Barrera has stated that he wants to be the first Mexican to win titles in four different weight classes. Is that also a goal of yours?

JMM: I want to see what happens with De La Hoya-Pacquiao and Hatton. I want a big-money fight. Let's see what happens; maybe I'll go up to 140 pounds.

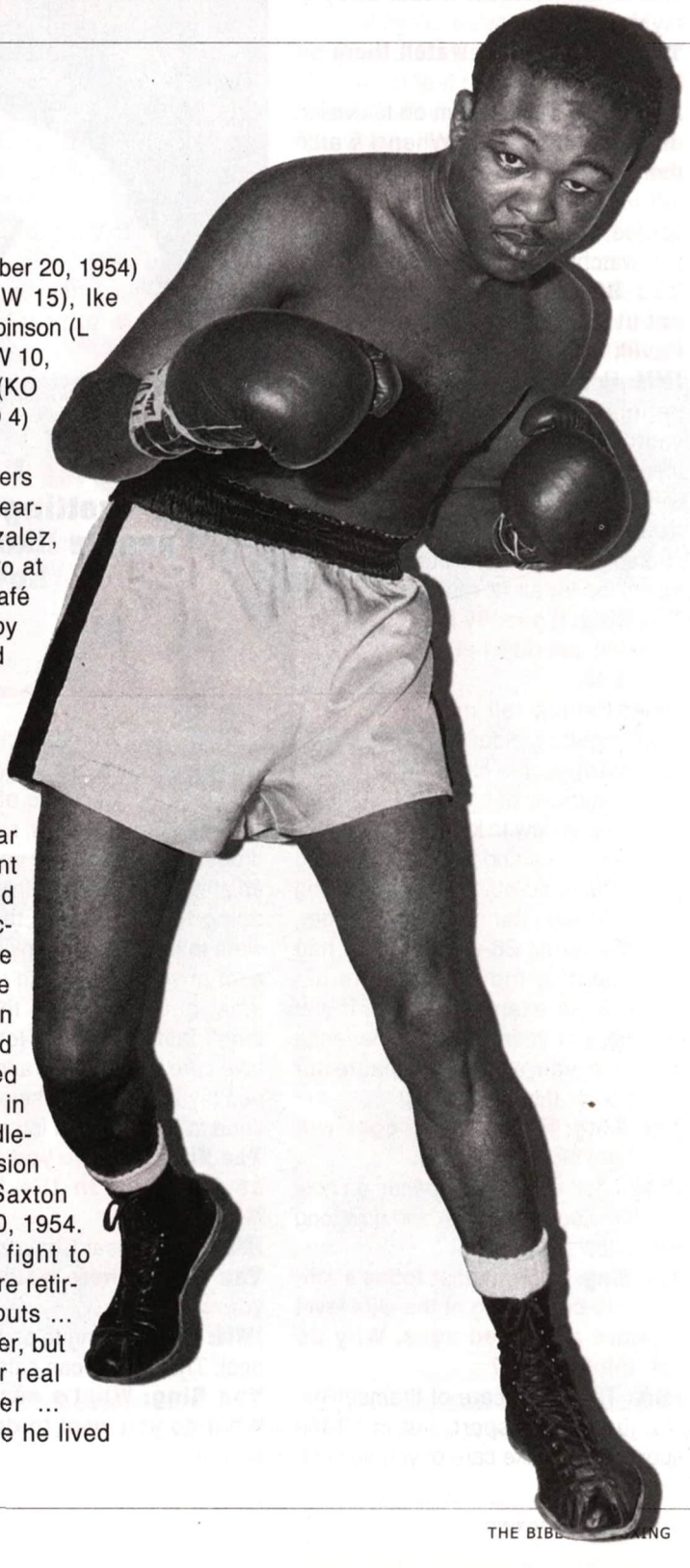
The Ring: A hypothetical question: You can fight any opponent you want in front of a 100,000 adoring Mexican fans in Mexico City. Who would you want the opponent to be?

JMM: Pacquiao. Manny Pacquiao. ■

Hall of Fame Profile

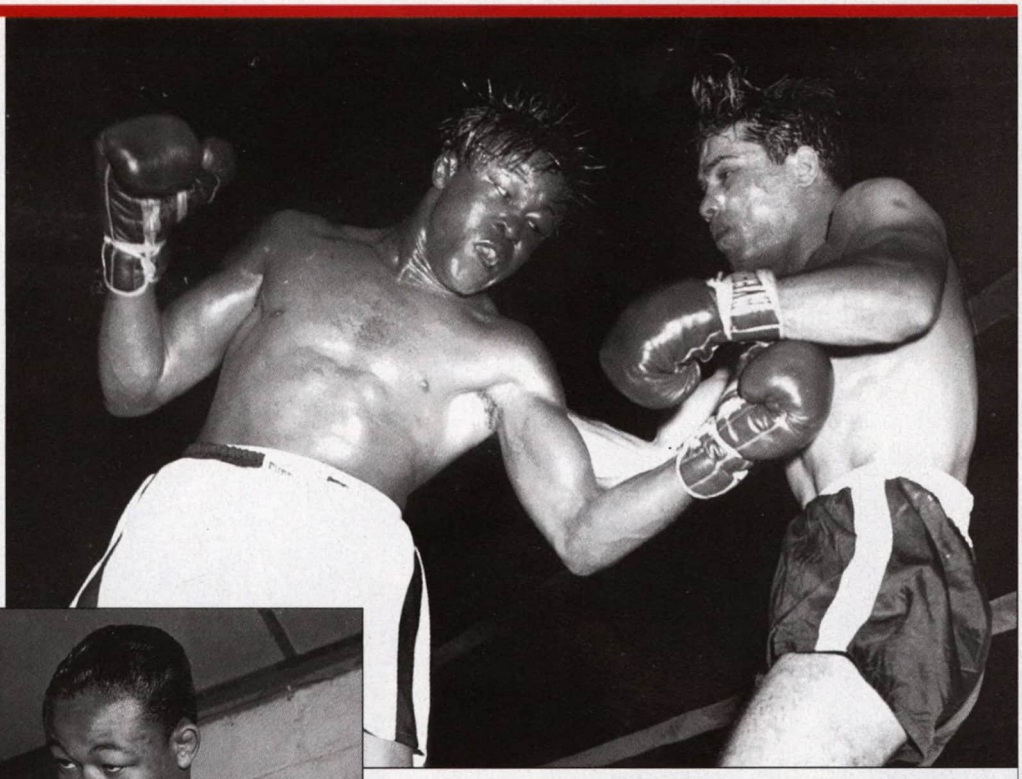
THE RING features a thumbnail biography of a ring great who has received the ultimate honor: induction into the International Boxing Hall of Fame in Canastota, New York

Kid Gavilan

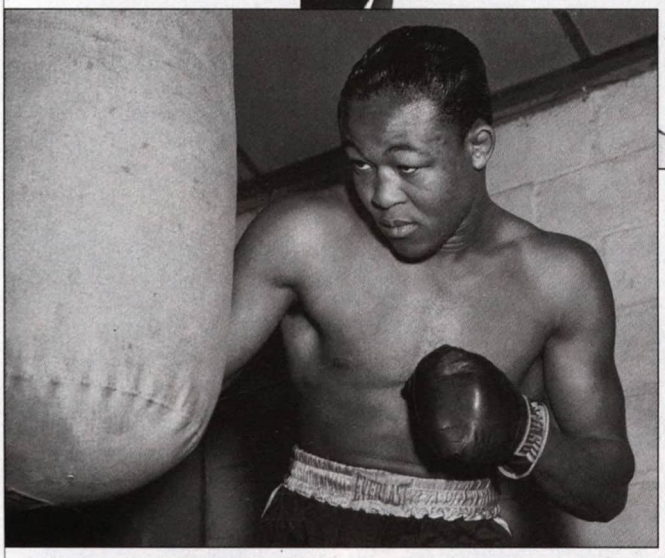


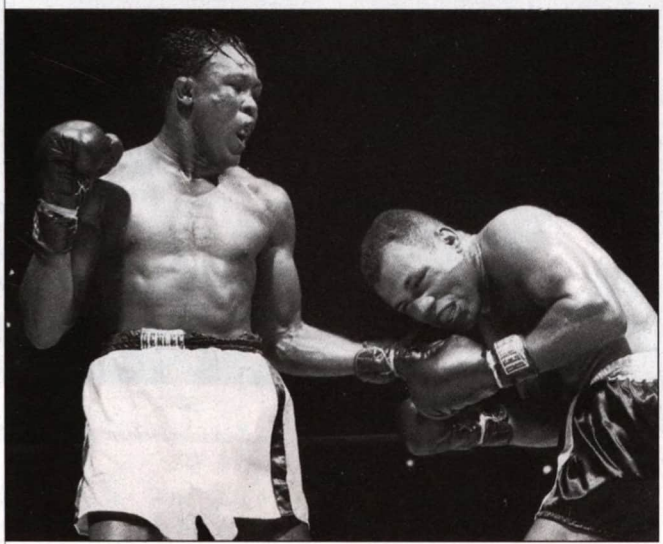
Birthdate: January 6, 1926
Birthplace: Camaguey, Cuba
Date of Death: February 13, 2003
Nickname: The Cuban Hawk
Weight Class: Welterweight
Professional Record: 107-30-6 (28)
Titles: World Welterweight (May 18, 1951-October 20, 1954)
Best Performances: Carmen Basilio (W 15), Ike Williams (W 10, W 10), Beau Jack (W 10), Ray Robinson (L 15), Johnny Bratton (W 15, W 15), Billy Graham (W 10, W 15, W 15), Gil Turner (KO 11), Walter Cartier (KO 10), Chuck Davey (KO 10), Tony Janiro (W 10, KO 4)
Year of IBHOF Induction: 1990
Background: One of the most popular fighters of the early years of TV boxing, eventually appearing in 34 televised bouts ... Born Gerardo Gonzalez, he began boxing at the age of 12 and turned pro at 16, on June 5, 1943 ... Named after a Havana café called El Gavilan (the hawk), which was owned by is first manager, Fernando Balido ... Developed a flamboyant, crowd-pleasing style that featured the bolo punch, a looping uppercut that mimicked the motion of a machete cutting sugar cane ... Was on the wrong end of close decision in his first title challenge, losing a 15-round decision to reigning welterweight champ Sugar Ray Robinson in July '49 ... Captured the vacant welterweight on May 18, 1951, with a 15-round decision over Johnny Bratton ... Made seven successful defenses of the 147-pound crown, while also maintaining a busy schedule of non-title fights ... Knockout of local favorite Gil Turner in Philadelphia in July '52 set an attendance record (39,025) for a welterweight title fight that lasted until the 1980 Roberto Duran-Ray Leonard bout in Montreal ... Challenged Bobo Olson for the middleweight title in August '54, losing a 15-round decision ... Lost welter title to mob-controlled Johnny Saxton via a highly controversial decision on October 20, 1954. Nineteen of 21 writers at ringside gave the fight to Gavilan ... Fought in 10 different countries before retiring in '58 ... Never knocked out in 143 pro bouts ... Returned to Cuba after his fighting days were over, but lost his 39-acre ranch, home, cars, and other real estate when Fidel Castro came into power ... Eventually returned to the United States, where he lived out the rest of his days on the edge of poverty.

"The Cuban Hawk" swoops to the attack against Italo Scortichini in a June 1953 non-title bout held in Detroit. Gavilan won a 10-round unanimous decision.



A primetime Gavilan pounds the heavybag. His energetic style of fighting required great conditioning, but he was gifted with a chin that allowed him to survive a 15-year pro career without ever being knocked out.

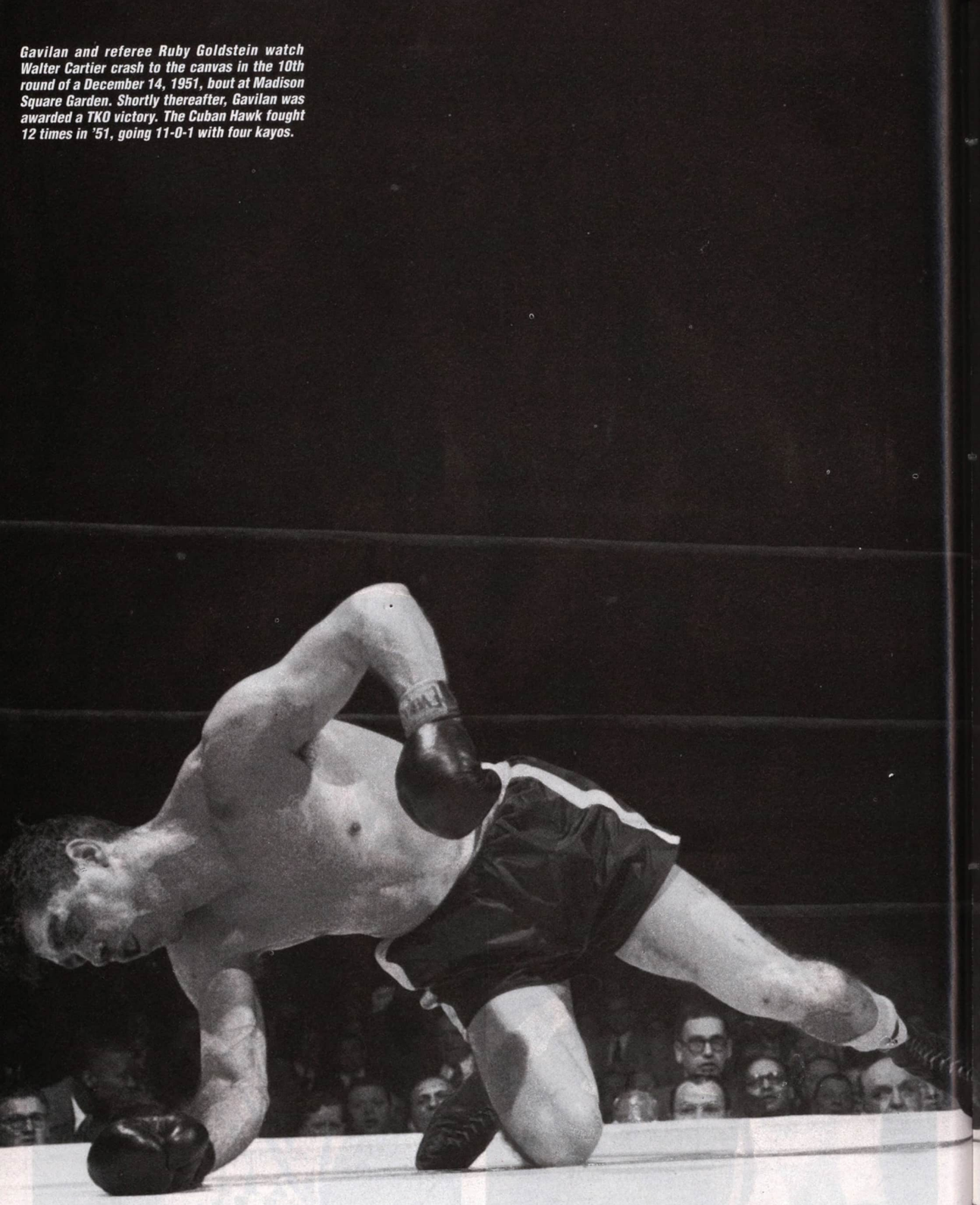


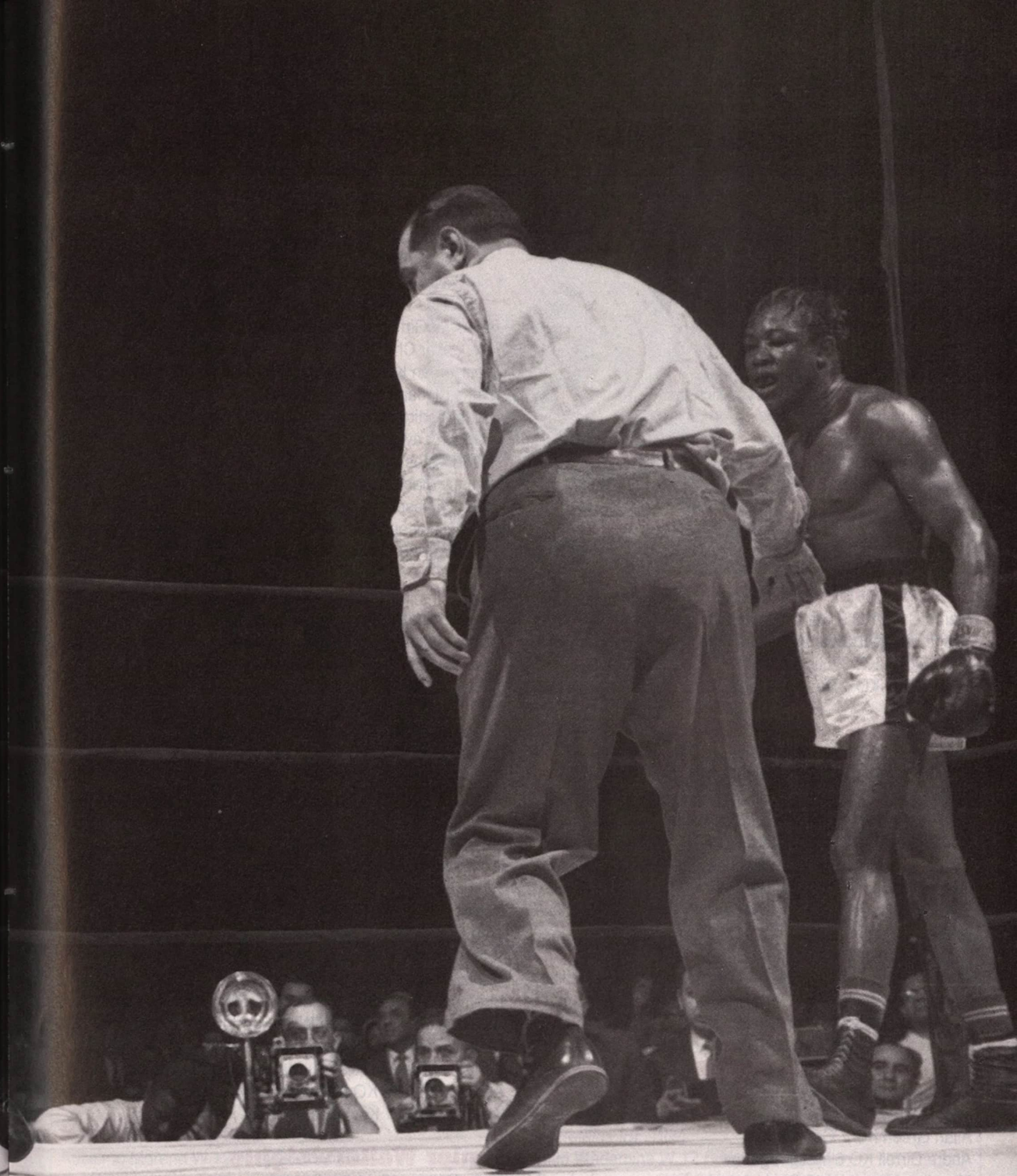


Ralph "Tiger" Jones ducks into a left hand from Gavilan during their August 1953 non-title bout at Madison Square Garden, which the Cuban won via unanimous decision.

Gavilan as he looked in 1997, six years before his death from heart disease at age 77.

Gavilan and referee Ruby Goldstein watch Walter Cartier crash to the canvas in the 10th round of a December 14, 1951, bout at Madison Square Garden. Shortly thereafter, Gavilan was awarded a TKO victory. The Cuban Hawk fought 12 times in '51, going 11-0-1 with four kayos.





[Summary]

Heavyweights

David Haye KO 5 Monte Barrett
Alexander Dimitrenko KO 3 Luan Krasniqi
Michael Grant W 12 Paul Marinaccio
Jameel McCline W 12 Mike Mollo
Ray Austin KO 1 Andrew Golota
Brian Minto KO 4 Galen Brown
Alex Leapai W 10 Pieter Cronje
Chazz Witherspoon KO 8 Adam Richards
George Arias KO 4 Cesar Acevedo
Kevin Johnson KO 3 Matthew Greer
Bruce Seldon KO 2 Brad Gregory
Dominick Guinn W 8 Gabe Brown
Albert Sosnowski KO 8 Danny Williams
Deontay Wilder KO 2 Ethan Cox
Derric Rossy KO 2 William Shahan

Cruiserweights

Marco Cayu KO 9 Carlos Castedo
Yoshinori Nishizawa KO 3 Jae-Chan Kim
Enad Licina KO 3 Otis Griffin
Soon Botes KO 1 Sean Santana

Light Heavyweights

Joe Calzaghe W 12 Roy Jones
(*Retains World Championship*)
Hugo Garay W 12 Juergen Braehmer
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Glen Johnson KO 4 Aaron Norwood
Vyacheslav Uzelkov W 12 Alejandro Lakatos
Darren Stubbs W 10 Mark Nilsen
Zdravko Micevic W 10 Joel Casey
Nadjib Mohammedi KO 6 Amar Mancer
Julio Dominguez KO 5 Martin Bruer
Alessio Rondelli KO 2 Istvan Varga
Tommy Karpency KO 1 Lee Fortune
Curtis Stevens KO 1 Ray Smith

Super Middleweights

Anthony Mundine W 10 Rafael Pintos
Jermain Taylor W 12 Jeff Lacy
Allan Green KO 7 Carl Daniels
Andre Dirrell KO 6 Victor Oganov
Maselino Masoe W 12 Sonni Angelo
Les Piper W 10 William Hadlow
Daniel Pawsey KO 8 Sean Connell
Matvey Korobov KO 3 Mario Evangelista
Daniel Jacobs KO 3 Jimmy Campbell
Carlos De Leon Jr. KO 3 Brad Austin
Marcos Reyes KO 1 Saul Duran

Middleweights

Arthur Abraham KO 6 Raul Marquez
(*Retains IBF Title*)
Felix Sturm W 12 Sebastian Sylvester
(*Retains WBA Title*)
James McGirt Jr. D 10 Marcus Upshaw
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 10 Matt Vanda
Saul Roman KO 9 Yory Boy Campas
James Kirkland KO 8 Brian Vera
Vanes Martirosyan KO 1 Charles Howe
Shannan Taylor KO 12 Dondon Sultan
Frank Paines W 12 Rene Fernandez
Matthew Macklin W 10 Geard Ajetovic
Gaetano Nespro W 10 Matteo Signani
Junior Talipeau W 10 Robert Toomey
Billy Lyell W 8 Vance Garvey

Junior Middleweights

Sergei Dzindziruk W 12 Joel Julio
Dmitriy Salita W 12 Derrick Campos
Ryan Rhodes W 12 Vincent Vuma
Jimmy Lange W 10 Grover Wiley
Nefzi Ayoub W 10 Michael Recloux
Tursunbay Ablyakimov KO 9 Anton Solopov
Kazuhiko Hidaka KO 4 Taisei Marumoto

Welterweights

Zab Judah W 10 Ernest Johnson
Isaac Hlatswayo D 12 Delvin Rodriguez
Matthew Hatton W 10 Ben Tackie
Junior Witter KO 3 Victor Castro
Kermit Cintron W 12 Lovemore Ndou
Tom Glover W 10 Scott Woolford
Valery Brazhnik KO 8 Boris Akopov
Hamza Issa W 10 Juan Bas
Shamone Alvarez W 10 Terrance Cauthen
Sirimongkol Singwancha W 8 Rogelio Castaneda
Dean Harrison KO 8 Chris Long
Bongani Mwelase KO 7 Ali Nuumbembe
Alexis Camacho KO 2 Edvan Barros
Kell Brook KO 1 Kevin McIntyre

Junior Welterweights

Ricky Hatton KO 11 Paulie Malignaggi
(*Retains World Title*)
Lamont Peterson W 10 Lanardo Tyner
Martin Coggi W 12 Carlos Vilches
Jean Weigel W 10 Decha Bankluaygym
Ismael El Massoudi W 10 Rachid Drilzane
Carlos Ahumada W 10 Gaston Sellan

Ivan Sanchez W 10 Daniel Perez
Frankie Figueroa W 8 Emanuel Augustus
Devon Alexander KO 4 Sun-Haeng Lee
Javier Castro KO 4 Efren Hinojosa
Ali Chebah KO 3 Pipino Cuevas Jr.
Danny Garcia W 6 Adan Hernandez

Lightweights

Julio Diaz W 10 Fernando Trejo
Marco Antonio Barrera KO 4 Sammy Ventura
Daniel Brizuela W 12 Eduardo Roman
Mlungisi Dlamini W 12 Gairy St. Clair
Patricio Pedrero W 10 Leonardo Gonzalez
Steve Saville KO 7 Baz Carey
Juan Castaneda KO 7 Miguel Lopez
Adrien Broner KO 6 Terrance Jett
Rustam Nugaev KO 1 Justin Juuko

Junior Lightweights

Ricky Burns KO 7 Yakubu Amidu
Roberto Arrieta KO 6 Alejandro Lima
Fulgencio Zuniga KO 3 Diego Castillo

Featherweights

Martin Honorio KO 5 Frankie Archuleta
Juan Carlos Olvera W 10 Jesus Garcia
Rogers Mtagwa KO 10 Tomas Villa
Lizardo Moreno W 10 Luis Perez
Miguel Garcia W 8 Walter Estrada
Dat Nguyen W 8 Carlos Diaz

Junior Featherweights

Celestino Caballero KO 4 Steve Molitor
(*Wins IBF Title; Retains WBA Title*)
Jhonny Gonzalez KO 4 Reynaldo Lopez
Heriberto Ruiz W 8 Rey Bautista
Daniel Ponce De Leon KO 4 Damian Marchiano
Taofeek Bisuga W 12 Azeez Onikoyi
Andres Romero W 12 Rodolfo Hernandez
Wilfredo Vazquez Jr. KO 12 Victor Martinez
Damir Bulatov W 10 Ji Tao
Bernard Dunne Tech. Win 7 Cristian Faccio
Kazuyoshi Niki KO 6 Petchromklao Or Ekarin
Elpher Paganpan KO 3 Noel Sungahid
Olivier Lontchi KO 2 Ruben Estanislao
Teon Kennedy W 6 Felipe Almanza

Bantamweights

Anselmo Moreno W 12 Rolly Matsushita
(*Retains WBA Title*)
Fernando Montiel W10 Alberto Rosas
Nick Otieno W 12 Ibrahim Adewale
Alexis Kabore W 12 Rafael Tirado
Tshifhiwa Munyai W 12 Bongani Mahlangu
Jerope Mercado W 10 Yuki Murai
Kohei Ohba W 10 Masaki Kawabata

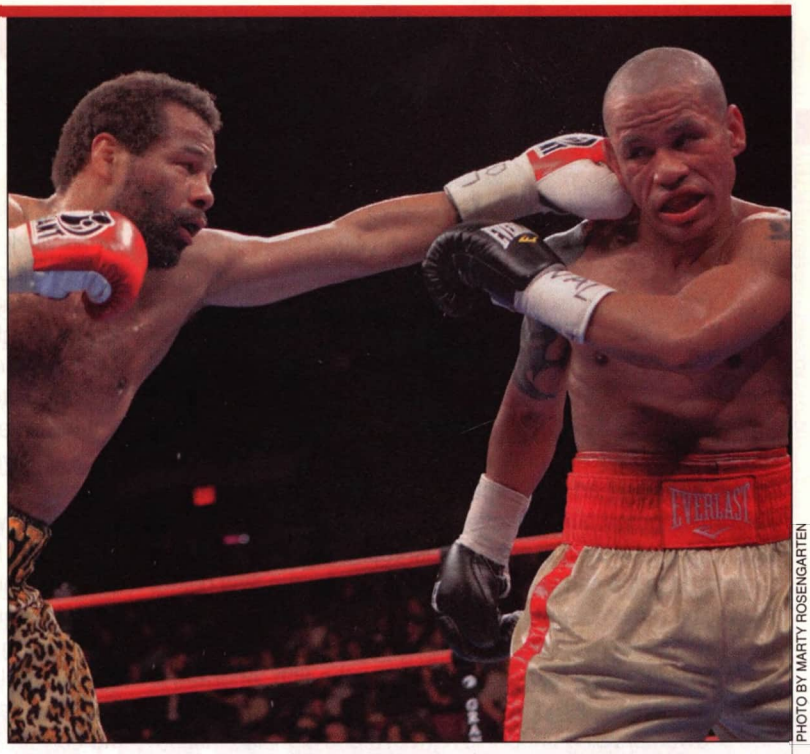


PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Junior welterweight Emanuel Augustus hits Francisco Figueroa with a left to the head

Shinny Bayaar W 10 Jordi Gallart
Daisuke Maruyama W 10 Petchklongpai Sor Thantip
Victor Zaleta KO 4 Oscar Arciniega
Akira Umano KO 1 Akinori Matsubara

Junior Bantamweights

Vic Darchinyan KO 9 Cristian Mijares
(*Wins WBA/WBC Titles; Retains IBF Title*)
Jorge Arce KO 4 Isidro Garcia
Panomroonglek Kratingdaenggym W 10 Ali Hosini
Don Broadhurst W 12 Isaac Quaye
Muvhuso Nedzanani W 10 Marvin Tampos
Kenji Ohba KO 3 Worawut Muangsima
Raul Martinez KO 1 Victor Proa

Flyweights

Nonito Donaire KO 6 Moruti Mthalane
(*Retains IBF Title*)
Pongsaklek Wonjongkam KO 2 Danny Sutton
Ryo Miyazaki Tech. Win 9 Takuya Yamada

Junior Flyweights

Ulises Solis W 12 Nerys Espinoza
(*Retains IBF Title*)
Yukio Wadamine W 12 Suriya Klongpajol
Mfundo Gwayana KO 5 Motswaki Moselesele

Strawweights

Juan Palacios KO 7 Teruo Misawa
Yasutaka Kuroki W 12 Toshikazu Waga
Wanheng Menayothin W 10 Ardin Diale
Pit Anacaya KO 5 Gerald Garcia

Lucian Bute W 12 Librado Andrade

Montreal, Quebec: Romanian native Bute, who now lives in Montreal, was hoping to impress American audiences in his Showtime network debut, but his second defense of the IBF super middleweight strap ended up mired in controversy after several questionable calls by Canadian referee Marlon B. Wright culminated in a long count in the 12th that some believe salvaged Bute's title and unbeaten record.

For 11 rounds, Bute, 167¾, boxed masterfully, briefly scoring a knockdown in the 10th and running away on the cards, although an unrelenting Andrade, 168, La Habra, California, forced him to move a lot, hold at times, and work hard. Unfortunately, it is only the last round—which saw Bute hammered to the canvas mere seconds before the final bell—that will be remembered.

The 28-year-old southpaw Bute completely outclassed his opponent in the first four stanzas. But by the fifth, Andrade's deliberate, heavy-fisted attack began to catch up with Bute, who showed bruising under his right eye and signaled fatigue by increasingly falling into clinches. But, in what appeared a clear case of partisan refereeing, Wright chose to warn Andrade several times for holding despite Bute clearly initiating the majority of the tie-ups.

The 11th saw both fighters trading bombs for the full three minutes as a seemingly spent Bute dug deep and rattled off rapid combinations to steal the round. Still, the war of attrition was being won by Andrade, who succeeded in pushing Bute beyond his limit in the 12th and had him clutching and wrestling for survival.

In the closing minute, an exhausted Bute lost control of his legs and staggered to the ropes before Andrade nailed him with a right hand that collapsed him to his knees near his corner. Amid the deafening screams of his 16,322 fans at the Bell Centre, Bute sat there vacant-eyed and apparently out with just three seconds left on the clock.

"I was very tired in the 12th and I don't think it was a punch that put me down as much as it was fatigue," said Bute, who was dismissive of any controversy. "In my head it was just hearing the crowd cheering that helped me to beat the count."

Wright quickly picked up the count, but spun on his heels after tolling six and began to warn Andrade to move back to a neutral corner. Given his earlier calls and the fact that Andrade had positioned himself in reasonable proximity to the corner, Wright's admonition came off as both excessive and unwarranted. Meanwhile Bute, who managed to unsteadily regain his feet just as Wright was turning around to warn Andrade, enjoyed the benefit of more than 20 seconds passing between the time he was knocked down and when Wright finished his eight-count. Wright eventually signaled the fight to continue, but there was no time on the clock (nor would there have been with a proper count), and Bute, who appeared to be held upright by the ropes, was saved by the bell.

Ironically, Wright probably did more damage than favors for Bute as the extended count set off a maelstrom of protest.

"The ref is the champion, he should get the belt," said Andrade, 27-2 (21). "I was far enough in the corner. The ref should have been looking out for his safety, not at me. He should have waved it off when Bute was on the floor. He was completely out."

Had Wright simply administered the eight-count and allowed the fight to continue, there would not have been any time on the clock anyway. The only argument Andrade supporters really can make is that the ref should have deemed Bute, 23-0 (18), unable to continue regardless of the time (or lack thereof) on the clock.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Anrade and Bute trade bombs

Despite his dismal finish, all scores favored Bute, with judge Alex Levin (USA) scoring 117-109, Benoit Rousel (Canada) seeing it 115-11, and Mickey Vann (England) carding 115-110. THE RING scored it for Bute, 115-111.

Overall, Wright's conduct served to cloud the bout in suspicion. The 30-year-old Andrade's stock has risen as a result and he's virtually guaranteed a lucrative rematch.

"I came in determined to win by knockout. I had no choice. I was not going to win a decision, and I did it. I knocked him out," Andrade said afterward. "He hit me with everything he had and didn't hurt me once."

Promoters: **Interbox, Golden Boy Promotions**

(10-24-08)

Paul Salgado

PHOTO BY ALEXANDER HASSENSTEIN/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Abraham aims a jab at Marquez

Arthur Abraham KO 6 Raul Marquez

Bamberg, Germany: With Kelly Pavlik, THE RING middleweight champion, in need of rehabilitating his fractured image, the imperative for Abraham, 159¾, Berlin, Germany, via Yerevan, Armenia, is to keep winning and surely he and Pavlik will be on a collision course. Certainly, this is the course being suggested by HBO, for Abraham's credentials are first-rate, which he emphasized with a suitably clinical performance against Marquez, 160, Houston, Texas, via Valle Hermoso, Mexico, at the Jako Arena before the 37-year-old challenger quit on his stool at the end of six rounds. It was the 28-year-old Abraham's ninth defense of the IBF middleweight title.

THE RING Fighter of the Month

Vic Darchinyan

Admit it: You thought it was all downhill for Darchinyan after Nonito Donaire flattened him in the summer of '07. Darchinyan was already 31 years old, he'd gotten rocked so bad that a few minutes later he was claiming he didn't get knocked out, he'd gotten wiped out by a guy who wasn't known as a particularly big puncher, and, perhaps most significantly, he was a fighter whose success was built around supreme confidence. Add it all up, and Darchinyan's loss to Donaire sure looked like the beginning of the end.

It turns out the defeat simply prompted a new beginning, one that saw the Aussie puncher add a few wrinkles to his game and, just 16 months after the loss to Donaire, score the biggest, most impressive win of his career. As a heavy underdog against pound-for-pound-rated multiple beltholder Cristian Mijares, Darchinyan was utterly dominant, scoring a knockdown in the opening round, another in the ninth, and a stoppage at the end of that ninth frame.

Just beating a fighter as highly regarded as Mijares would have been noteworthy enough. But when you add in the way Darchinyan was widely written off barely a year earlier, it becomes an accomplishment clearly worthy of Fighter of the Month honors.

PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN/HOGANPHOTOS.COM

Marquez is well past his prime, of course, but his only other defeats in the past decade came against Fernando Vargas in a junior middleweight title challenge and then-undefeated future world middleweight champion Jermain Taylor. An upset win earlier this year over unbeaten prospect Giovanni Lorenzo set "El Diamante" up for another title shot, but against an elite fighter like Abraham, the disparity in class was clear from the outset.

Abraham, 28-0 (23), bossed the opening round with his jab while looking for a place to land his right hand on the retreating Marquez, whose half-hearted attempts to counter productively proved futile. The former U.S. Olympian did manage to turn the tables in the second round, firing a series of southpaw jabs that penetrated Abraham's guard, and he also drove several hard lefts into the Armenian's face. But Abraham hit back with a stream of right hands and he continued to have success with his right in the third, one right uppercut drawing a loud response from the capacity crowd in the arena. The challenger's face was becoming heavily marked.

But Marquez came back again in round four, firing punches with both fists in an attempt to turn the tide. American referee Wayne Kelly had to warn him when his enthusiasm propelled him to dig his left in low. With the respite, Abraham caught his breath again and regained the initiative, and his strong jab and accurate right hand began to strike Marquez with ominous regularity. Still, it was a surprise when Marquez, being treated by his cutman, decided to pack it in during the interval before round seven.

"For a while, I thought I was in with a good shot, but he is very strong and kept coming at me," said Marquez, 41-4-1 (29). "I tried my best and I knew it would be a hard fight, but he was just too quick and too strong."

Abraham said, "He disappointed the crowd because he had had enough and I can't really understand that, but it wasn't a problem at any point in the fight for me. He is a very experienced boxer and a good fighter, but I am experienced too. I had my tactics and I slowly raised the tempo until it was too much for him. Next year, I would love to get the chance to fight Pavlik or [Felix] Sturm. I believe I would beat these boxers, if we fought."

Promoter: **Sauerland Event**
(11-8-08)
Brian Doogan

Chris John W 12 Hiroyuki Enoki

Tokyo, Japan: Unbeaten WBA feather titlist John, 125½, made his 10th defense of the alphabet title as he coped with the constant attacks of previously unbeaten Japanese challenger Enoki, 126, and pounded out a hard-fought unanimous decision over 12 rounds. Judges Derek Milham (Australia) and Pint Prayadsab (Thailand) both scored it 118-110, and Raul Caiz Jr. (USA) had it 117-111, all in favor

PHOTO BY TORU YAMANAKA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Enoki (right) gives John his toughest defense

of John. But it wasn't as easy a fight as the scorecards might indicate.

Angelo Hyder, John's Australian cutman, happened to see Enoki after the bout and warmly said to him, "It wasn't a one-sided fight ... Many rounds were close, and Chris John took most of those rounds. You fought very well."

Enoki's manager/promoter Shingo Suzuki admired the victor, saying, "John was very tough. Though Enoki occasionally landed heavy shots, John could take them. Also, he was smart enough to change his strategy in the middle of the fight."

They mixed it up from the outset, with Enoki boring in with solid overhand rights, while John retaliated by throwing jabs and bodyshots. It was a round that could have gone either way, but all three judges scored it for John.

Enoki displayed the best of his abilities in the second, when he badly shook John with a solid left hook and scored with vicious left-right combinations. But the Japanese banger had his left eyelid reddened by John's crisp rights in the closing seconds of the round.

In retrospect, it might have been a mistake for Enoki to reveal his weapons as early as the second round, as John began to change his way of fighting in the third. The Indonesian began to get off first and then immediately move away from Enoki's retaliation. This strategy paid off with John dominating the third through fifth sessions by a clear margin. However, John did sustain a gash on his right eye in the fifth.

With his left eye swelling, Enoki came forward in the sixth, but John whipped the challenger with more accurate combinations to win another point. The seventh saw Enoki furiously attack with combinations, but John connected with a few good counters to the face. It was a difficult round to score, but all three judges again gave it to John.

Enoki, 27-1-2 (17), was a courageous aggressor in the ninth and 10th, though his left eye appeared almost closed. Particularly in the ninth, Enoki enjoyed a second wind, as he busily scored with stinging lefts and left-right combos. But by the 11th, the challenger was slowing. John, 42-0-1 (22), maintained excellent speed in his combination punching, and he battered his fast-fading foe, whose left cheek was swelling grotesquely, for the last six minutes.

As the official tallies were announced to indicate John's victory, some of Enoki's adherents disputed the margins. But most of the crowd admitted John's superiority in speed and skills, if not in power.

It was probably one of John's toughest defenses because of Enoki's mental strength and powerpunching, and not one of the beltholder's finest showings overall.

The referee was Silvestre Abainza (Philippines).

Promoter: **Kadoebi Jewel Promotions**

(10-24-08)

Joe Koizumi

Mikkel Kessler KO 3 Danilo Haussler

Oldenburg, Germany: The manner in which Kessler, 167, Monaco, via Copenhagen, Denmark, has been criticized by some in the past 12 months bears little correlation to his current standing and ultimate potential. Derided for not fighting Edison Miranda, Kessler instead regained the WBA super middleweight title and, more significantly, sharpened his ambition to rule his realm, which Haussler, 167, Frankfurt, Germany, was never equipped to dispute in a summary execution at Weser-Ems-Halle.

The recent abdication after 11 years of dominance at 168 pounds by Joe Calzaghe, who inflicted the only defeat of Kessler's career in a compelling encounter last year in Wales, has cleared the path for the 29-year-old Dane's eventual succession. Recognition in America may prove to be more problematic, but Kessler's appearance at ringside for Calzaghe's light heavyweight title defense against Roy Jones showed that he is keenly aware of this and is determined to break down the barriers.

"Joe Calzaghe said that he would promote a fight between me and Bernard Hopkins and I would love this kind of opportunity," said Kessler. "I would also welcome a fight against Kelly Pavlik, although he might not want to test himself again for some time [after losing to Hopkins]. But I want people to know that I'm prepared to take on any of the big names in and around my division. Losing to Joe was not what I wanted, of course, but I won't allow that to hold me back for the rest of my career."

PHOTO BY DAVID HECKER/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Kessler rams a left into Haussler's face

Haussler, 29-4-1 (7), could have done with the support of a couple of panzer divisions to hold back Kessler, for he was almost defenseless on his own against the Dane's formidable weaponry. From the opening exchanges, it was clear that he was totally outgunned, as Kessler's jab became virtually implanted in his face, setting him up for heavy right hands. By the end of the second round, the ominous accumulation of blows had opened a cut beneath the German challenger's left eye, which was damaged also by swelling.

The end would not be long in coming. Bravely, Haussler stood his ground, but the tactic was foolhardy, which Kessler emphasized with a hard combination culminating in a straight left to the jaw. Haussler fell heavily and was counted out by South African referee Stanley Christodoulou at 1:08 of round three. "I tried to exchange punches with him and that was a big mistake," acknowledged the 33-year-old German. "He is the strongest fighter I have ever faced, incredibly strong. I knew he would be tough to fight, but he was even tougher than I expected."

Kessler had no fight set up as this issue went to press, but Hopkins shook his hand in New York and a more meaningful meeting, if Hopkins chooses to fight on, could be of interest to hardcore fight fans.

Promoter: **Sauerland Event**
(10-25-08)
Brian Doogan

Steven Luevano W 12 Billy Dib

Atlantic City, New Jersey: Luevano is the sort of versatile fighter who tends to adapt his style to the situation and opponent. Against tough but limited Terdsak Jandaeng, the modest-punching southpaw carefully boxed his way to a lopsided victory. Against Mario Santiago, he took part in a crowd-pleasing slugfest (and nearly paid the price, escaping with a draw). Against Dib, an awkward, negative, athletic fighter who proved to be more style than substance, Luevano played it patient, picking his spots, never getting unnerved, and ultimately winning a decision. Many were quick to label the fight a bore, but if you were paying close attention, there was something compelling about watching Luevano think his way to victory. And there were even a few exciting exchanges late in the fight.

Making his fourth defense of the WBO featherweight strap, the 27-year-old Luevano, 126, La Puente, California, carried the opening round on the strength of three straight left hands, but it was clear that Dib, 126, Hurtsville, Australia, wasn't going to make anything easy for him. When he wasn't flashing a rascally smile, the 23-year-old Dib was trying to frustrate Luevano by staying out of range. Dib appeared to win the second round, displaying some nifty defensive radar as well as one eye-catching straight right hand. Late in the round, however, referee Steve Smoger (USA) warned Dib for getting dirty in the clinches.

The third was another decent round for Dib, but in the fourth, Luevano began to quietly take control. He walked Dib into an excellent straight left, then landed another left hand to the chin that caused to Dib to momentarily lose his balance. Of course, because Dib fights like a poor man's Naseem Hamed, rarely on balance to begin with, knocking him off-balance wasn't such a noteworthy feat.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Luevano drills Dib with a left

The best punch of the fifth round was a beautiful counter right hook by Luevano that caught Dib jumping in without jabbing, but the most memorable punch of the round was thrown by Dib. When Luevano stumbled partway through the ropes late in the round, Dib earned himself plenty of boos by landing a cheap shot to the chin from behind.

The sixth round saw Luevano knock Dib down with a straight left, but Smoger ruled that the fighters' feet had tangled and called it a slip. Still, the damage was done in terms of Luevano growing confident that he'd figured Dib out and "Billy The Kid" growing convinced that there wasn't much he could do to win. The composed and patient Luevano continued to pad his lead over the next three rounds.

The action heated up in the 10th, by far the best round of the

fight. Dib opened the round by landing good bodyshots, but Luevano countered with a picturesque left-right combination, then hurt Dib with a left hand, nearly knocking him down. Dib, however, responded with aggressive combinations along the ropes, and the fight fans at Boardwalk Hall found themselves applauding the action.

But the action was all Luevano, 36-1-1 (15), over the final two rounds. Two flush lefts scored in the 11th, and a series of big shots found the mark in the 12th, highlighted by a counter right hook that would have decked a fighter without a strong chin. Dib, however, appeared unhurt by the punch.

But a good chin is rarely enough to win a fight, and Dib, 21-1 (11), came up short on the scorecards. Adelaide Byrd (USA) saw it close at 115-113, Dave Moretti (USA) scored it 116-112, and Joseph Pasquale (USA) had it 117-111, the same as THE RING.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, Golden Boy Promotions**
(10-18-08)
Eric Raskin

Marco Antonio Rubio W 12 Enrique Ornelas

Atlantic City, New Jersey: If the middleweight talent pool wasn't so shallow, it would be farcical that Rubio and Ornelas were fighting to determine the next alphabet mandatory for middleweight champion Kelly Pavlik. But other than Pavlik and his number-one contender, Arthur Abraham, the rest of the current 160-pound crew is a rather unimposing lot. Moreover, despite Rubio and Ornelas' prosaic credentials, they staged a spirited, give-and-take scrap in their battle for a title shot, which as luck would have it was on the Bernard Hopkins-Kelly Pavlik undercard at Boardwalk Hall.

Ornelas, La Habra, California, via Jesus De Monte, Mexico, got off to a brisk start. His punches appeared sharper than his adversary's, and he snapped Rubio's head back on a number of occasions during the first five rounds.

Rubio, Georgetown, Texas, via Terreon, Mexico, rallied back the first half of the sixth, but Ornelas, 160, came on late in the round, landing solid shots with both hands. Rubio, 159, connected with an eye-catching right uppercut to edge the seventh, but it was another bitterly contested session, with both men scoring well.

Rubio, 159, was on-target with a series of hard right hands in the eighth, and Ornelas' eyes began to swell. "El Veneno's" more consistent work also carried the ninth, but Ornelas got his powerpunches working again to enjoy a productive 10th, and the fight was still up for grabs going into the final two rounds.

The fresher Rubio, 28, exploded with a prolonged flurry late in the 11th to have Ornelas, 28, wobbly at the bell. Rubio, 43-4-1 (37), tried to finish the job early in the 12th, but Ornelas, 28-5 (18), dug in and fired back effectively to stave off disaster. Then it was Rubio's turn again, as he struck with a right and followed with a cluster of left hooks that appeared to hurt the weary Ornelas again in the closing moments.

Judge John Riley (USA) saw it 115-113 for Ornelas, but was overruled by Joseph Pasquale (USA) and John Poturaj (USA), who scored it for Rubio, 116-112 and 115-113, respectively. THE RING also thought Rubio nipped it, 115-114.

The referee was Eddie Cotton (USA).

Had Hopkins not given Pavlik such a one-sided beating in the main event, it's unlikely there would be much interest in a Pavlik-Rubio championship fight. But now that Pavlik is in desperate need of a get-well fight, Rubio will probably get his shot in early-2009.

Television: **HBO Pay-Per-View**
Promoters: **Top Rank, Golden Boy Promotions**
(10-18-08)
Nigel Collins

Oscar Larios W 12 Takahiro Aoh

Tokyo, Japan: Mexican veteran Larios, who is not licensed to fight in the United States due to a brain bleed suffered in a TKO loss to Jorge Linares in 2007, remains licensed elsewhere and ascended from WBC interim featherweight titleholder to full WBC titlist when Linares announced his move up in weight. In his first defense of the title, Larios, 126, barely kept the belt as he survived a very bad knockdown in the fourth and withstood shaky moments to be awarded a highly controversial split decision over previously unbeaten

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Rubio rallies late to edge Ornelas

PHOTO BY TOSHIFUMI KITAMURA/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Larios (left) was lucky to get the nod over Aoh

Japanese southpaw Aoh, 126. The spectators at Yoyogi First Gym were utterly shocked and appalled by the verdict.

Aoh, 24, took the lead in the opening session, as he caught Larios with sharp and fast lefts to the face and the midsection. Larios, 31, came out fighting furiously in the second, when he recklessly threw big punches to take back the initiative. In the third, Aoh got the better of Larios with precision, but "Chololo" fought back hard with overhand rights. In the closing seconds of the session, Aoh landed vicious lefts to the midsection to make Larios wince.

Late in the fourth round, Aoh connected with a beautiful southpaw right hook that sent Larios sprawling to the canvas. Referee Vic Drakulich (USA) almost tolled a 10-count, Larios' pride barely pulling him up in time. He gamely resumed fighting with rubbery legs, and Aoh attacked him hard, but the bell came to his rescue.

It was obviously a 10-8 round. But it was announced after the fourth that Aoh was penalized a point by referee Vic Drakulich because of Larios having suffered a cut on the right eye caused by a head clash. It became a 9-8 round for Aoh, though he had the titlist on the verge of a knockout. The crowd showed great displeasure with the penalization of Aoh based on the WBC eye-cut rule.

The WBC open scoring system revealed the tallies of the judges after the fourth to be 37-37 twice and 38-36 for Aoh. The announcement also created serious frustration for the spectators, who believed Aoh was surely ahead on points. THE RING had it 38-36 in Aoh's favor.

Encouraged by the fourth-round knockdown, the Japanese lefty attacked his shaky opponent with sharp combinations and almost dropped him with his trademark right hook in the fifth. Aoh looked dominant in the sixth and seventh with his fine display of fast right-left combos.

The eighth saw Larios begin to throw tremendous numbers of punches. They weren't accurate, however, and Aoh averted the roundhouse blows and countered him with good one-two combinations.

After the eighth, the scores further stunned the crowd: 75-75, 78-76 for Aoh, and 78-76 for Larios. It seemed impossible that anyone could see the fight even, much less actually have Larios ahead.

In round nine, Larios abruptly regained his zip and mental strength, and turned even more aggressive than in the eighth. Aoh was forced to the ropes by his pressure, and the round clearly belonged to the Mexican, as did the 10th.

Aoh, 16-1-1 (8), welcomed a second wind in the 11th and managed to outspeed and outpunch the titleholder. The 12th round was also taken by Aoh, who caught the beltholder with sharper and more accurate punches, while Larios, 64-6-1 (40), still pugnacious, kept missing the target.

In the end, Duane Ford (USA) scored it 114-112 for Aoh, David Sutherland (USA) 115-111 for Larios, and Hubert Minn

(USA) 114-112 in favor of Larios. THE RING saw it 115-111 for Aoh. This decision might damage the popularity of boxing in Japan. Many angry fans shouted out in disgust.

Also, the Japan Boxing Commission ought to discuss once again whether it should accept the WBC eye-cut rule or waive it under the JBC rules and regulations for the sake of fairness. Also, the validity and effectiveness of the open scoring system should be discussed without the JBC adopting it unconditionally. It could be argued that Aoh struggled in rounds nine and 10 because the shocking scores announced after the eighth affected him emotionally.

Promoter: **Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions**
(10-16-08)
Joe Koizumi

Hozumi Hasegawa KO 2 Alejandro Valdez

Tokyo, Japan: WBC bantam ruler Hasegawa, 118, impressively scored his seventh successful defense with a quick demolition of WBC number-two contender Valdez, 117½, at 2:41 of the second round at Yoyogi First Gym. It was a clash of southpaws, but the clash didn't last long.

Hasegawa, 27, lost the first round to the 24-year-old Mexican challenger, who threw good jabs that bounced back the Japanese fighter's head repeatedly. Hasegawa reflected afterward, "I felt it might become a long, tough fight."

However, it abruptly ended midway through the second session when Hasegawa turned loose and released a vicious overhand left to the ambitious Mexican. Down he went, and though Valdez, 21-3-1 (15), made it back to his feet inside of American referee Mike Griffin's count, Hasegawa, 25-2 (9), swarmed over the groggy challenger. The titlist sent Valdez reeling to the ropes with a barrage of punches, and the referee didn't hesitate to declare a halt.

Promoter: **Akihiko Honda's Teiken Promotions**
(10-16-08)
Joe Koizumi

Felix Sturm W 12 Sebastian Sylvester

Oberhausen, Germany: More than four years have elapsed since Sturm, 159½, Hamburg, Germany, shared the biggest stage with Oscar De La Hoya at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas in a bout that many felt the German deserved to win, and he has remained a fringe performer in the middleweight stakes ever since. But his skills and athleticism remain impressive and proved too much to handle for Sylvester, 159½, Greifswald, Germany, whose efforts to outbox the 29-year-old WBA middleweight titleholder were stifled even further by a four-inch height disadvantage, as Sturm secured a comfortable win at the Koenig Pilsener Arena.

With the benefit of hindsight, Sylvester would surely have pursued a more aggressive strategy, though perhaps his safety-first strategy was a legacy of having been knocked out in the first round of his pro debut in 2002 against Yury Zaytsev. The 28-year-old was also stopped by Amin Asikainen in his only other prior defeat in a European middleweight title bout in 2006, but he is normally more aggressive. His 12th-round stoppage of one-time Sturm conqueror Javier Castillejo in April 2008 increased his winning streak to eight fights and secured him a title shot. From early on, however, it was apparent that he was not about to extend the sequence.

He enjoyed a modicum of success in the opening round by landing a few right hands, but the more consistent work was done by Sturm's left jab, and this would be the story of the fight. When Sylvester tried to jab with him, he was merely playing into Sturm's capable hands. Briefly, he stepped up his attack in the third and his aggression probably won him the round, for he connected with some firm right crosses to the head, but the fight soon evolved into its prevalent pattern with Sturm landing a stiff jab and firing combinations that caused swelling under Sylvester's eyes by the fifth round.

The predictable exchanges soon made for monotonous viewing, for Sylvester's fate was obvious from such an early stage. Sturm, 31-2-1 (13), was content to just jab his way to victory over the closing rounds, confident that Sylvester, 29-3 (14), could do nothing to avoid the inevitable. Erkki Meronen (Finland) scored 119-109 and Hector Hernandez (Mexico) and Levi Martinez (USA) 118-110, all for Sturm, as did THE RING. The referee was Guillermo Perez Pineda (Panama).

"My jab was the key and I improved with every round," said Sturm. Alas, a unification fight against IBF titleholder Arthur Abraham or THE RING champion Kelly Pavlik appears to be nowhere on the horizon.

Promoter: **Universum-Box**
(11-1-08)
Brian Doogan

PHOTO BY LARS BARON/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Sturm jabs his way to victory over Sylvester

Cristobal Cruz W 12 Orlando Salido

Airway Heights, Washington: Heading into this bout for the vacant IBF featherweight trinket at Northern Quest Casino, members of Cruz' team noted that they didn't feel Salido, who tested positive for steroids after upsetting Robert Guerrero in 2006, was the same fighter without the performance-enhancing drugs. That prediction rang true when the 27-year-old Salido looked decidedly ordinary and perhaps even old in the ring, losing a close but correct decision to 31-year-old journeyman Cruz.

Cruz, 126, Tijuana, Mexico, was coming off an impressive upset victory over Thomas Mashaba on ESPN2 in March, probably the best win of a career that has generally seen him fall short when stepping up. That triumph seemed to elevate Cruz' confidence, and he was busier, stronger, and seemingly hungrier than Salido, 126, Ciudad Obregon, Mexico. Salido had some decent moments early, but there just didn't seem to be much snap in his punches, other than when he momentarily buckled Cruz' knees with a right hand in round six. When Salido failed to capitalize on that and Cruz came right at him effectively in the seventh, it was apparent that it was Cruz' fight to lose. Salido remained busy, but if you looked beyond the volume and focused on the landed punches and their effect, Cruz, 37-11-1 (23), was pulling away.

At the end of 12, Salido, 31-10-2 (2) with 1 no-contest, really looked like the loser, with his left eye badly swollen. He also didn't raise his arms at the final bell as if he thought he'd won, even though the fight was close and, at times, difficult to score. Usually, you see even fighters who are certain they've lost raise their arms at the bell.

Judge Pat Russell (USA) gave Salido the edge at 115-113, while judges Barry Druxman (USA) and Eugenia Williams both had it 116-112 for Cruz. THE RING saw the fight 116-113 in Cruz' favor.

The referee was Jack Reiss (USA).

Television: **Versus**
Promoter: **Banner Promotions**
(10-23-08)

Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. W 10 Matt Vanda

Las Vegas, Nevada: Either Chavez really was sick the first time, as he claimed, or the questionable split decision he received south of the border against Vanda back in July was just part of the youngster's learning curve. Whatever the case, Chavez proved in the rematch that he's the better fighter and that he's ready for bigger challenges.

The 22-year-old Chavez, 156, thoroughly outclassed Vanda, 156, over 10 rounds in their pay-per-view main event at Mandalay Bay. Chavez' speed, pace, movement, and longer reach were too much for the crude Vanda, who struggled to get off shots and work his way inside as effectively as he did in their first meeting.

Chavez, 38-0-1 (29), cruised through the first three rounds behind his jab. He was particularly impressive in the third, when he forced "The Predator" backward frequently and began finding a home for the left hook to the body.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Chavez had an easier time with Vanda in the rematch

The 30-year-old Vanda, 39-8 (22), picked up the pace in the fourth, when he caught Chavez along the ropes in the final minute and landed a hard right upstairs 10 seconds before the bell, but Chavez landed a late right cross, then a three-punch combo that seemed to give him the round. Chavez reasserted himself in the fifth as he went back to frustrating Vanda with his jab, crisp combos, and lateral movement.

Vanda buzzed Chavez with a left hook late in the sixth, but the Culiacan native seemed unfazed. The heavily tattooed Minnesotan enjoyed his best round of the night in the seventh, though, when he was busy and accurate enough to answer each time Chavez landed. The two traded at center ring midway through, and Vanda was able to pound Chavez along the ropes in the final 10 seconds. It was the closest Vanda came to turning it into the streetfight he wanted.

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

The ref rescues Garcia from rampaging Arce

Chavez came back to dominate the final three rounds. An increasingly stationary Vanda didn't do much in response when Chavez hurt him with a right hand to the jaw 30 seconds into the eighth, nor when the younger man stunned him later in the round with a combo along the ropes. In a strange moment, both fighters walked to their respective corners a few seconds before the bell actually rang to end the round.

Chavez tagged a weary Vanda almost at will in the ninth and 10th, but never appeared close to a knockout. Still, the judges' cards showed his dominance. Richard Houck (USA) had it 99-91, Glenn Trowbridge (USA) scored it 98-92, and Dave Moretti (USA) saw it 97-93, all for Chavez. THE RING agreed with Houck's score. The referee was Robert Byrd (USA).

According to CompuBox, Vanda landed 165 of 505 punches, as compared to 279 of 645 in the first bout. "I did change it up," said Chavez, who landed 176 of 625 shots. "I wanted him to see a whole different thing than he saw last time, and I think I showed it tonight."

Promoter: **Top Rank**
(11-1-08)

Jorge Arce KO 4 Isidro Garcia

Las Vegas, Nevada: Still trying to shake off memories of his one-sided loss to Cristian Mijares 19 months before, popular Mexican mighty mite Arce hoped to look impressive against the limited Garcia on the Julio Cesar Chavez Jr.-Matt Vanda undercard at Mandalay Bay. Arce, 115, posted a relatively early knockout, but had some rough moments against Garcia, 115.

The 29-year-old Arce used his longer jab to swing the momentum in his favor midway through the third, then unleashed a series of vicious left hooks to the body early in the fourth in taking out Garcia.

Despite giving up three inches in height and four inches in reach, the 32-year-old Garcia was a stubborn opponent for 2½ rounds. Arce used his jab to good effect in the opening three minutes, but constantly left himself open and seemed bothered by the speed of the forward-moving Garcia, who taunted Arce to come at him.

Against his corner's advice, Arce went with his instincts and began slugging it out with his light-punching opponent in the second. Garcia looked quicker, and his right hand continually caught Arce's attention, though "El Travieso" delivered a clean right cross to the chin with a minute to go in the round. Arce mimicked Garcia's taunts late in the round, and the two nearly brawled when "El Chino" landed a shot after the bell.

Garcia, who was coming off a decision loss to unbeaten Raul Martinez in July, continued connecting with right hands upstairs early in the third. Arce suffered a small cut under his left eye but never appeared seriously hurt. Still, the shots convinced him to change tactics. He got on his toes and spent the final two minutes of the round sticking and moving with his jab, which he used to set up several rapid-fire combos that left Garcia looking frozen.

Arce, 51-4-1 (39), opened the fourth by driving Garcia into the ropes and blasting him with a wicked left hook just below the ribcage. Sensing Garcia, 25-7-2 (8), was hurt, Arce fired off two more identical shots, the last of which put Garcia down. Garcia rose at seven, and seemed to block much of Arce's frenetic follow-up flurry, but referee Tony Weeks (USA) jumped in at the 48-second mark. There was little protest from Garcia or his corner.

Arce landed 83 of 321 shots, according to CompuBox, while Garcia connected on 69 of 248 punches. Arce, who is rated number six at junior bantamweight by THE RING, called

out junior featherweight champ Israel Vazquez afterward. It seemed a bit of a stretch, especially after a good-but-not-great performance that didn't quell suspicions that Arce is fading at 29.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(11-1-08)

Nonito Donaire KO 6 Moruti Mthalane

Las Vegas, Nevada: Donaire's trainer and father, Nonito Donaire Sr., dubbed his son's performance against Mthalane his worst as a pro, claiming "The Filipino Flash" was lucky to win. That was almost certainly an overstatement, but the flyweight beltholder did have some problems with the determined Mthalane at Mandalay Bay before getting a bizarre stoppage.

Mthalane, the IBF's mandatory challenger, was fighting outside of his native South Africa for the first time. He looked stiff in the opening three rounds as Donaire, 112, dominated from a distance.

Circling out of a wide stance with his right hand held high to guard against the left hook, Donaire pumped counter jabs and hooks as the shorter Mthalane, 111, struggled to get close. Donaire, 19-1 (13), began landing to the body in the second, and late in the third he froze Mthalane, 22-2 (15), with a left uppercut to the jaw.

The 26-year-old Mthalane, who was coming off a surprisingly dominant win against former contender Hussein Hussein in July, began relaxing in the fourth. He started using his jab more effectively to get inside, and midway through he snapped Donaire's head back with a left. Mthalane showed good hand speed when he let his punches go, which left Donaire pawing instead of asserting himself.

Donaire was showing some reddening on the right side of his face during a close fifth round, during which he began to step up his pace to meet that of his frisky challenger. In the sixth, Donaire opened in a southpaw stance, which seemed to confuse Mthalane. He landed some solid right jabs, one of which came as Mthalane waded in and left "Babyface" rattled.

Referee Joe Cortez (USA) called time midway through the round and summoned the ringside physician, who examined Mthalane and ruled that he could not continue due to a cut on the inside of his left eyelid. The cut wasn't easy to notice, and Donaire had to signal to Cortez that Mthalane was injured. The crowd booed the stoppage, which came at the 1:31 mark, and Mthalane wept into the arms of one of his cornermen.

Mthalane landed 63 of 278 punches according to CompuBox. Donaire, who landed 63 of 311 shots, said afterward that he injured a finger on his left hand in the second round. His team also cited a career-long 11-month layoff as a reason for his unspectacular showing.

Reports in the Filipino press a few days later quoted an anonymous team member as blaming Donaire's wife, a martial-arts athlete, for interfering with the fighter's training. Regardless, Donaire seems to be aiming for a jump to 115 pounds and a showdown with Jorge Arce, who also won on the Chavez-Vanda undercard.

Television: **Pay-Per-View**
Promoter: **Top Rank**
(11-1-08)

Sergei Dzindziruk W 12 Joel Julio

Oberhausen, Germany: Formerly touted as one of the top young prospects in boxing, and still considered by many to be a potential future champion, Julio, 154, Miami, Florida, via Monteria, Colombia, encountered too much class and too much experience in the solid and tough Dzindziruk, 153¼, Hamburg, Germany, via St. Nizhnegorsk, Ukraine, who won a clear points decision at the Koenig Pilsener Arena. It was Dzindziruk's fifth defense of the WBO junior middleweight title that he won from Daniel Santos in 2005.

Given that Julio's only previous defeat had come against Carlos Quintana in an eliminator for the WBA welterweight title in 2006, it was a surprise to many that the 23-year-old chose

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA/TOP RANK

Donaire (left) and Mthalane fire simultaneously

to travel to Germany to take on Dzindziruk. Like Quintana, Dzindziruk is a southpaw with sound boxing skills and he is 2½ inches taller than Julio, which meant that the 6' titleholder was able to dictate once he had come to terms with the powerful, aggressive rushes of the challenger. With seven straight wins on his resume, including victories over Cornelius Bundrage and Ishe Smith from *The Contender* reality-TV program, Julio had put behind him the defeat by Quintana, but, unfortunately, he had not learned the lessons.

His heavy punches hurt Dzindziruk, 36-0 (22), early in the fight when he managed to force the Ukrainian onto the ropes and unload. For sustained periods, it appeared as if he might be able to overwhelm Dzindziruk. But the 32-year-old lefty began to assert himself and, once he got his fluid jab going, he accumulated points at a canter.

PHOTO BY LARS BARON/BONGARTS/GETTY IMAGES

Dzinziruk clocks Julio with a right

Julio, 34-2 (31), looked frustrated and one-dimensional in dealing with Dzindziruk's slick movement and sharp punching, and, as the fight wore on, it became clear that Julio would require a knockout to win. He was simply unable to land clean shots quickly enough or often enough, and Dzindziruk avoided trouble over the last few rounds to seal his win.

Manfred Kuechler (Germany) and William Lerch (USA) both scored 116-112 for Dzindziruk while Andrew Smale (South Africa) saw it 117-111 for the Ukrainian. THE RING also scored for Dzindziruk by 116-112. The referee was Genaro Rodriguez (USA).

Promoter: **Universum-Box**
(11-1-08)
Brian Doogan

Giacobbe Fragomeni KO 8 Rudolf Kraj

Milan, Italy: For the 39-year-old Fragomeni, 194½, Lombardia, Italy, this was an emotional climax to a long journey, but the nature of his victory for the vacant WBC cruiserweight title against Kraj, 198½, Hamburg, Germany, via Melnik, Czech Republic, was anticlimactic for just about everybody else. With blood dripping into Fragomeni's left eye from a cut that had been caused by an accidental headbutt in the preceding round, Japanese referee Yuji Fukuchi stopped the fight at the end of round eight on the advice of the ringside doctor and the decision went to Fragomeni on the strength of his lead on the judges' scorecards, sparking joyful scenes at Palalido.

But it was tough on the 30-year-old Kraj, who might have expected to come out on top down the stretch against the Italian veteran. In fact, the manner in which he managed to nullify a lot of Fragomeni's work led many of his supporters to question the merits of Fragomeni's lead after eight rounds. All three judges, Robin Dolpierre (France), Esa Lehtosaari (Finland), and Richard James Davies (England), had Fragomeni ahead by identical scores of 77-74. "I do not agree with the decision," said Kraj. "I hope that justice will be done and I am granted a rematch immediately."

Kraj was unbeaten coming in and David Haye's decision to vacate his cruiserweight titles to compete at heavyweight seemed like the perfect opportunity. His pedigree was underlined in his winning an Olympic silver medal, though Fragomeni's only defeat was inflicted by Haye by ninth-round stoppage in 2006 in a fight in which the Italian cut the British big hitter and inflicted a series of blows that hurt him. Kraj, on the other hand, with his solid boxing skills, remained pretty much unscathed against Fragomeni. Over the first few rounds he utilized his 3½-inch height advantage to outbox the Italian, who relied mostly on stalking the Germany-based Czech but landing little of note.

Fragomeni, 26-1 (10), had better rounds in the fourth and the sixth, narrowing the distance and getting off more punches, but Kraj, 14-1 (10), remained calm despite the crowd's vociferous cheers indicating their man's ascendancy. When their heads came together in the seventh it was the Italian who emerged with a deep cut, and the crimson flood into his left eye persuaded the doctor to intervene at the end of the eighth. A rematch would be the only logical course of action to determine a worthy winner, but the Italian may seek an alternative challenge for his first title defense.

Promoter: **OPI 2000**
(10-24-08)
Brian Doogan ■

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[New Faces]

(Continued from Page 26)

He moved them to Puerto Rico, where Fernando was introduced to gunfire at the age of eight.

"I heard this loud bang and everyone hit the floor, but I was still standing because I didn't know what that was," recalled Fernando, with a hearty laugh. "We didn't know what crime was, or anything about drugs or guns."

Two months later, the family moved to Buffalo, New York, where Fernando and his brothers and sisters saw snow for the first time. In 1997, Fernando and his family arrived in Salisbury so Pedro could find work in the poultry industry.

It was in Salisbury where Fernando was introduced to boxing by realtor Hal Chernoff, who runs the Main Street Gym. The Guerrero boys, Alex, Carmello, and little Fernando, were highly competitive with one another: who could do the most push-ups, who could do the most sit-ups or pull-ups, who could beat up who. Pedro grew so fed up with their squabbling, he'd tell them to go outside and settle it, which usually meant that Fernando, the youngest of the trio, got the worst of it.

One day, Alex told Fernando that he had taken up boxing. Naturally, as a little brother, Fernando had to tag along. Only Alex and Carmello didn't want their pesky little sibling with them. That changed when Chernoff came to pick up the boys one day and saw this 13-year-old sitting on his front step.

"I said to Carmello, 'Who's that?' because he was well built for someone his age," Chernoff said. "Carmello told him that it was his younger brother. I asked Fernando if he wanted to come with us, and Fernando told me he didn't want to box; he liked soccer. Soon after, I saw him for a few days in the gym, and then I didn't see him for a while. He popped up again, and that was it."

By the time he was 15, Fernando was hooked and began competing in local amateur tournaments. It wasn't long before Chernoff started taking the Guerrero boys to national events. Alex gave it up as a teenager, but Carmello looked like he had promise, going to the Olympic Trials in 2004 at 141

Guerrero made easy work of Omid Bahreini, stopping him in the first round for his eighth victory—all within the distance. Guerrero's kayo streak ended in his 10th fight, against Tyrone Watson, but the consolation was that it came in front of 6,000 rabid hometown fans.

pounds. Then it was discovered that Carmello had heart arrhythmia (irregular heartbeat) and, as a consequence, had to quit boxing. But watching his older brother left a lasting impression on Fernando.

"I was 18 years old when Carmello went to the U.S. Trials and I saw all of the Olympians: Andre Ward, Lamont Peterson, Rock Allen," Fernando recalled. "I was in the juniors, but seeing those guys inspired me even more. That's what I wanted. I had my direction from there, going to the Olympics."

That goal faded fast when Guerrero lost to Shawn Porter in the 165-pound U.S. Olympic Trials for the '08 Beijing team. Fernando signed with Prize Fight Promotions in November '07 and made his pro debut a month later. Since then, his stature has grown considerably, especially in Salisbury.

"I think my popularity in Salisbury goes back to every little piece that got me here," Guerrero said. "I've never been in just one place, so I know how to adapt. Coming to America wasn't easy for me. I didn't know how to speak English; my friends were my schoolteachers. I was a shy person then, I didn't know any kids my own age. I adapted by realizing that you can't just be with one social group, so I learned to be friendly with everyone."

The ability to attract a big crowd in Salisbury makes Guerrero a much more viable TV option, according to Farhood. "TV networks love the energy and enthusiasm of a large, loud crowd," the announcer said. "Secondly, being able to fight at home, because you draw considerable crowds, enables you to call the shots in terms of when you fight, whom you fight, and how often you fight. That's an advantage most prospects don't have."

It's still too early to tell whether or not Guerrero can one day become a world champion. He needs to shorten his punches and improve his defense. Still, it would be unwise to alter his style too much.

"If there is any fighter from the U.S. class of '08 whose style lends itself much better to the pro game than the amateurs, it's Guerrero," Farhood said. "He's a heavy puncher and the touchy-feely style of the amateurs didn't suit him."

That all-action style and his magnetic personality is what led to the outpouring Guerrero received from Salisbury in early-October. Chernoff, now Guerrero's manager and co-trainer, with Barry Hunter (who works with Lamont and Anthony Peterson) hopes it continues. So does Fernando, who can't sit at any Salisbury eatery without someone picking up the tab—accompanied by a wave and a nod. ■

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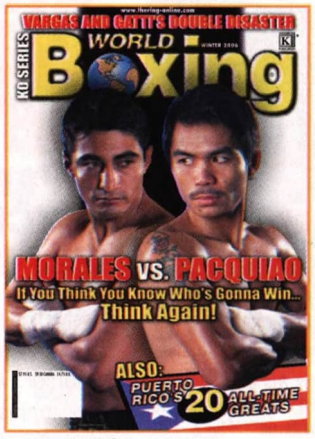

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Dec. 1995: Lewis vs. Morrison, Bowe vs. Holyfield: Who Will Survive To Fight Tyson? Plus: James Thunder, Sammy Fuentes, tattoos.

Feb. 1996: Roy Jones vs. Pernell Whitaker: World Boxing Picks The Pound-For-Pound Best. Plus: Frankie Randall, Butterbean, two-sport boxers.

April 1996: The 10 Best Fights Of 1996. Plus: Jeff Fenech, Quartey & Trinidad, fantasy boxing.

June 1996: Hey, Roy Jones, You Say You're Bored? Take These Six Steps To Tyson. Plus: Guys never in bad fights, Lenzie Morgan, Cleveland Williams.

Winter 1996: Myth vs. Reality. In Search Of The True Tyson (color). Plus: Lonnie Bradley, George Foreman & HBO, Bowe-Golota II preview.

Spring 1997: Is Andrew Golota Too Dangerous For Boxing? Plus: Bowe-Golota II (color), Michael Moorer, top heavyweight fights of '96, fantasy boxing, short fighters.

Summer 1997: Building The Perfect Heavyweight ... One Piece At A Time (color). Plus: Nielsen-Holmes, *Heavyweight Explosion*, fantasy boxing.

Fall 1997: The Search For The Next Great Heavyweight (color). Plus: Jesse Ferguson, fantasy boxing, Foreman phenomenon.

Winter 1997: If He Never Fights Again ... How Will Mike Tyson Be Remembered? (color). Plus: Roy Jones, Bert Cooper.

Spring 1998: A Look Back At '97 ... A Look Ahead To '98. Plus: Naseem Hamed (color).

Summer 1998: Tomorrow's Superstars: Six Who Will Lead Boxing Into The Next Century (color). Plus: Julio Cesar Chavez, David Tua.

Winter 1998: Why Trinidad's Gonna Kick Oscar's Golden Butt (color). Plus: Foreman-Holmes, 10 fights that changed history.

Spring 1999: Oscar De La Hoya vs. Ike Quartey: World Boxing Picks The Winner (color). Plus: Mike Tyson debate, 10 all-time greatest welterweight fights.

Summer 1999: To Hell With The Judges! Lennox Lewis Is The Champ! Plus: De La Hoya-Trinidad preview, anti-Tyson era, Terronn Millett.

Fall 1999: Danger Ahead! Is Oscar's Macho Madness Dangerous To His Health? Plus: Ali vs. today's top 10, kayo victims, heavyweight report card.

Winter 1999: Why De La Hoya Deserved The Decision Over Trinidad. Plus: Johnny Tapia, Mark Johnson, heavyweight report card, seniors.

Spring 2000: Now We Know Grant's A *Fighter!* (We Just Don't Know How Good A Fighter). Plus: Fernando Vargas, Muhammad Ali, crying game.

Summer 2000: Mosley vs. De La Hoya: Why It's Happening ... Who Will Win! Plus: Paul Spadafora, Oba Carr, suffering survivors.

Fall 2000: 10 Reasons Mike Tyson Can Beat Lennox Lewis. Plus: Arturo Gatti, Felix Trinidad, Mike Griffith.

[All-color beginning with the March 2001 issue]

March 2001: The Ultimate Boxing Ratings. Plus: Tyson-Golota, Marco Antonio Barrera, Joel Cassamayor.

Nov. 2001: It's Time To Flex Your Muscles, Roy: Fight The Trinidad-Hopkins Winner Next! Plus: Laila-Jacqui, Floyd Mayweather, greatest upsets.

July 2002: Jones vs. Hopkins: What Will Happen When The Trash Talk Stops. Plus: Forrest-Mosley, Arturo Gatti, Wayne McCullough, De La Hoya-Vargas preview, great junior middleweight moments.

Nov. 2002: Lennox Lewis—Is He The Best Heavyweight Since Muhammad Ali? Plus: Naseem Hamed, Kostya Tszyu, Diobelys Hurtado, Rocky Juarez, 10 fights that transcended boxing.

Feb. 2003: Can Anyone Wipe The Smile Off Oscar's Face? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Eric Lucas, Jesse James Leija, Shane Mosley, 10 all-time most exciting fighters.

June 2003: Lennox's Legacy On The Line: Will He Be Toppled In '03? Plus: Fernando Vargas, Arturo Gatti, 2002 in review.

Oct. 2003: Hall Call: Today's Best Fighters—Who's Headed To Canastota? Plus: Hasim Rahman, Mayweather-De La Hoya, Miguel Barrera, Winky Wright, Roy Jones, heavyweight flops.

May 2004: Vitali Klitschko: Another Step Toward "World Domination." Plus: Shane Mosley, junior middle report card, when losers win, 2003 in review.

Sept. 2004: Hopkins vs. De La Hoya: What Is Oscar Thinking? Plus: Wright-Mosley, Corrales-Casamayor, Glen Johnson, Felix Sturm, Lennox Lewis, 2004 Hall of Fame, lightweight report card.

Dec. 2004: What's Next? Has Mike Tyson Run Out Of Options? Plus: Gatti & Leija, Kermit Cintron, Floyd Mayweather, British boxing slump, ultimate ratings, featherweight report card.

April 2005: Tszyu Erases Mitchell ... And All Doubts. Plus: Roy Jones, Judah-Spinks preview, Travis Simms, Carl Thompson, Bernard Hopkins, old age.

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Summer 2006: Pac-Man To The Rescue! Can A 130-Pound Filipino Carry Boxing On His Back? Plus: Oscar De La Hoya, Arturo Gatti, O'Neil Bell, Martin Castillo, Mikkel Kessler, 10 greatest junior light fights, cruiserweight report card.

Winter 2006: Morales vs. Pacquiao: If You Think You Know Who's Gonna Win ... Think Again! Plus: Vargas & Gatti, Angelo Dundee, Carl Froch, second-generation fighters, fighting past 40, 20 greatest Puerto Ricans.

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[THE RING Flashback]

Through the years with "The Bible of Boxing"

September 1988

COVER STORY: "Sugar Ray: Here He Comes Again!" refers to an interview with the allegedly retired Ray Leonard, conducted by Nigel Collins. Although he ducks the comeback issue "as adroitly as he avoided Hagler's lethal blows," Leonard comes very close to admitting he would return to the ring, most likely against Donny Lalonde, which is exactly what happened.

Leonard is much more forthcoming when asked about other topics. He says he thinks Thomas Hearns has an "inferiority complex," admits that he was "awful" at the beginning of his career as an HBO broadcaster, and that Hagler called him a "little bitch" during their fight.

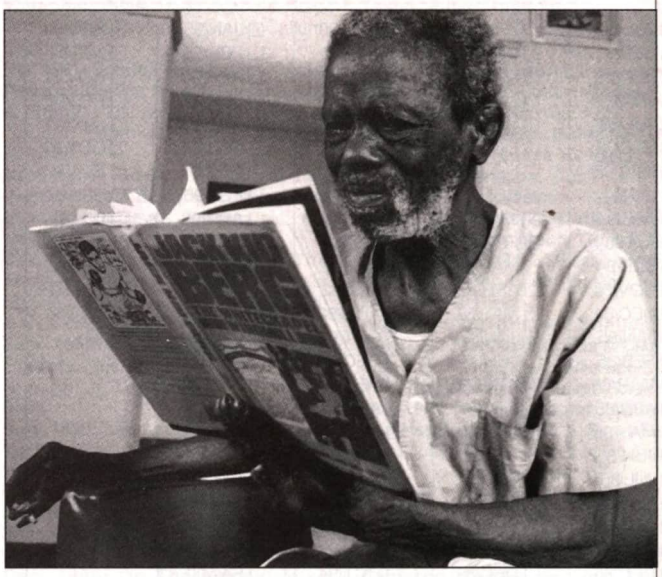
When asked if he has any regrets, Leonard's reply is unexpectedly candid: "Yes, I didn't listen to my wife as much as I should have. Her perception of people could have saved me heartaches, heartbreaks, headaches, and a couple of dollars."

Leonard had four more fights after the interview, knocking out Lalonde, fighting an exciting draw with Hearns, outpointing old Roberto Duran in a dull rubber match, losing to Terry Norris, and finally getting TKO'd by Hector Camacho.

"The Horror Of Kid Chocolate" by Jonathan Rendell was a stunning coup for THE RING, which came about when British journalist Rendell informed the editor he was visiting Cuba and wondered if there was anything he could write for the magazine. Told we would love something on Chocolate, Rendell went into his Sherlock Holmes mode and, after much trial and error, finally tracked down the legendary "Havana Bon Bon" in his hometown.

Chocolate, living in a dilapidated mansion that smelled of open drains, was a sad sight, painfully thin, unkempt, and dressed in rumpled clothes. But until the rum took hold, he is happy to recall some of the highlights of his career.

"I once fought for five pesos on the streets and became



Chocolate looks at an old foe's bio during his final interview

World Champions

(for the period ended June 3)

Heavyweight: Michael Spinks
Light Heavyweight: vacant
Middleweight: vacant
Welterweight: Lloyd Honeyghan
Lightweight: vacant
Featherweight: Antonio Esparragoza
Bantamweight: vacant
Flyweight: Sot Chitalada

a rich man," he said. "For years I lived in New York. I had a fine apartment. I knew everyone. Fats Waller was a friend of mine. At the Cotton Club he had a band, the Hot Chocolates, and Duke Ellington called me King Chocolate. It was an honor. I owned three houses on this square and my cars, of course. Now I rent this house from the government."

Then suddenly, "Chocolate began to clutch his stomach and howl like a small boy. 'I'm hungry,' he shrieked. 'I need my lunch! I'm so hungry I could die.'"

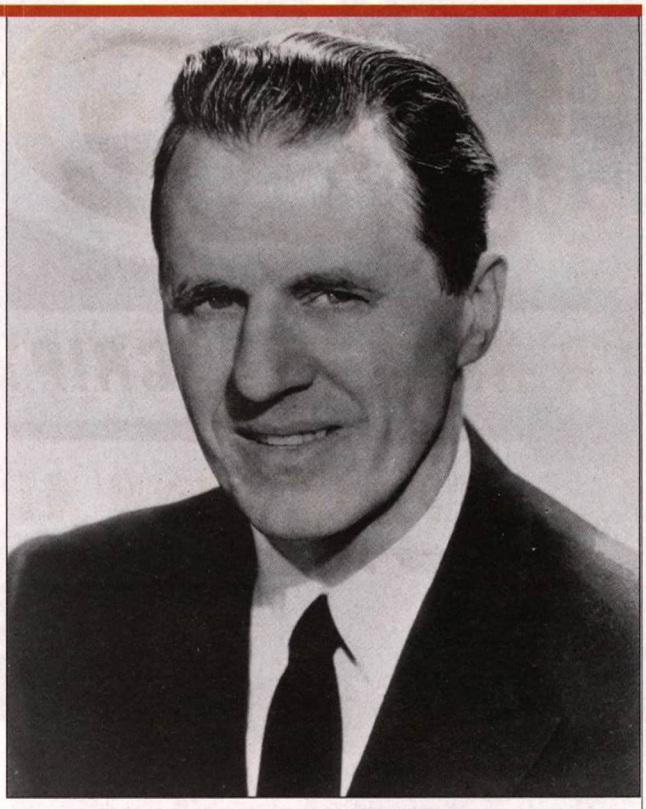
The interview ended when Chocolate's son leads him away to the "bedroom, with its urine-stained mattress half-covered with a dirty sheet, and a pile of human feces on the floor."

Chocolate died on August 8, 1988. THE RING interview, conducted a month or so before, was the last he ever gave.

"Gillette TV Years 1960-1964" is a chapter from Don Dunphy's recently published book, *Don Dunphy At Ringside*, in which the Hall of Fame broadcaster wrote about his transition from radio to television and some of the famous fights he covered, including the tragic third fight between Emile Griffith and Benny "Kid" Paret.

"The replays went on the air and showed the beating Paret was taking," wrote Dunphy. "Again and again they were repeated. I heard later that the ratings for the post-fight show were more than the fight itself. Apparently, people were calling friends and telling them to tune in, that a guy was getting beat to death on the TV."

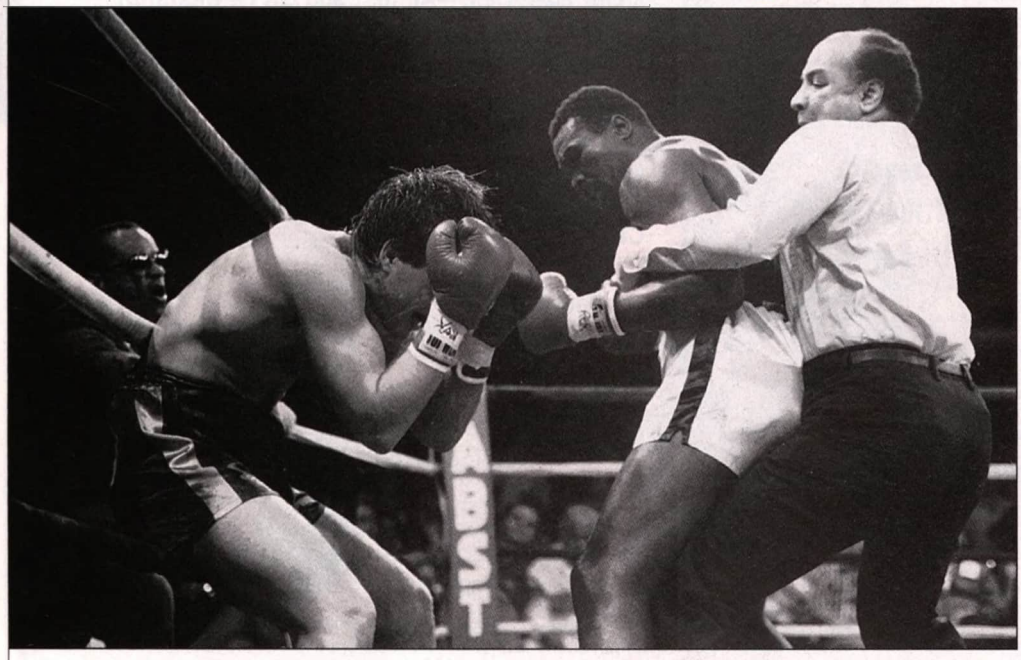
"Boxer Shorts" is a thumbnail sketch of two up-and-comers, featuring middleweight Reggie Johnson and light heavyweight Donnell Wingfield. Johnson went on to have a fine career, winning the WBA middleweight and IBF light heavyweight titles, and was still active when he was arrested in June 2008 and charged with stealing $120,000 from the Houston Area Urban League. Wingfield soon turned into a journeyman, posting a 29-12-1 (15) record before retiring in 2001.



Dunphy in his prime as a Hall of Fame broadcaster

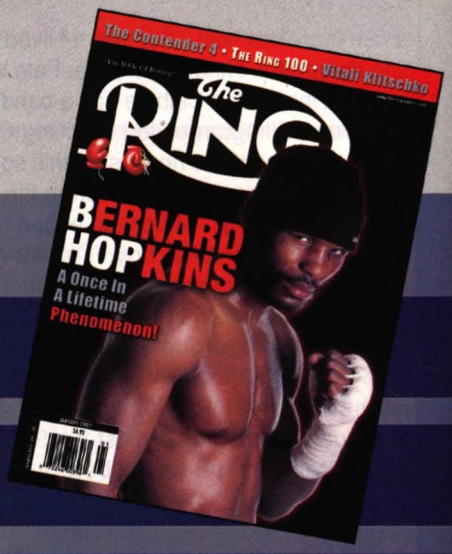
"Fighter Of The Month" is the aforementioned Don Lalonde, who had just defended the WBC light heavyweight title with a fifth-round TKO of former titlist Leslie Stewart in Trinidad.

"Rings Around The World" includes J.R. Jowett's coverage of John "The Beast" Mugabi's "embarrassingly easy" third-round TKO of hapless Knox Brown in Atlantic City. "I probably could have taken him out in the first round," said Mugabi, "but I intentionally let up. I wanted to carry him a little bit for the audience's sake." ■



Ref Joe Cortez rescues Brown from rampaging Mugabi

The RING



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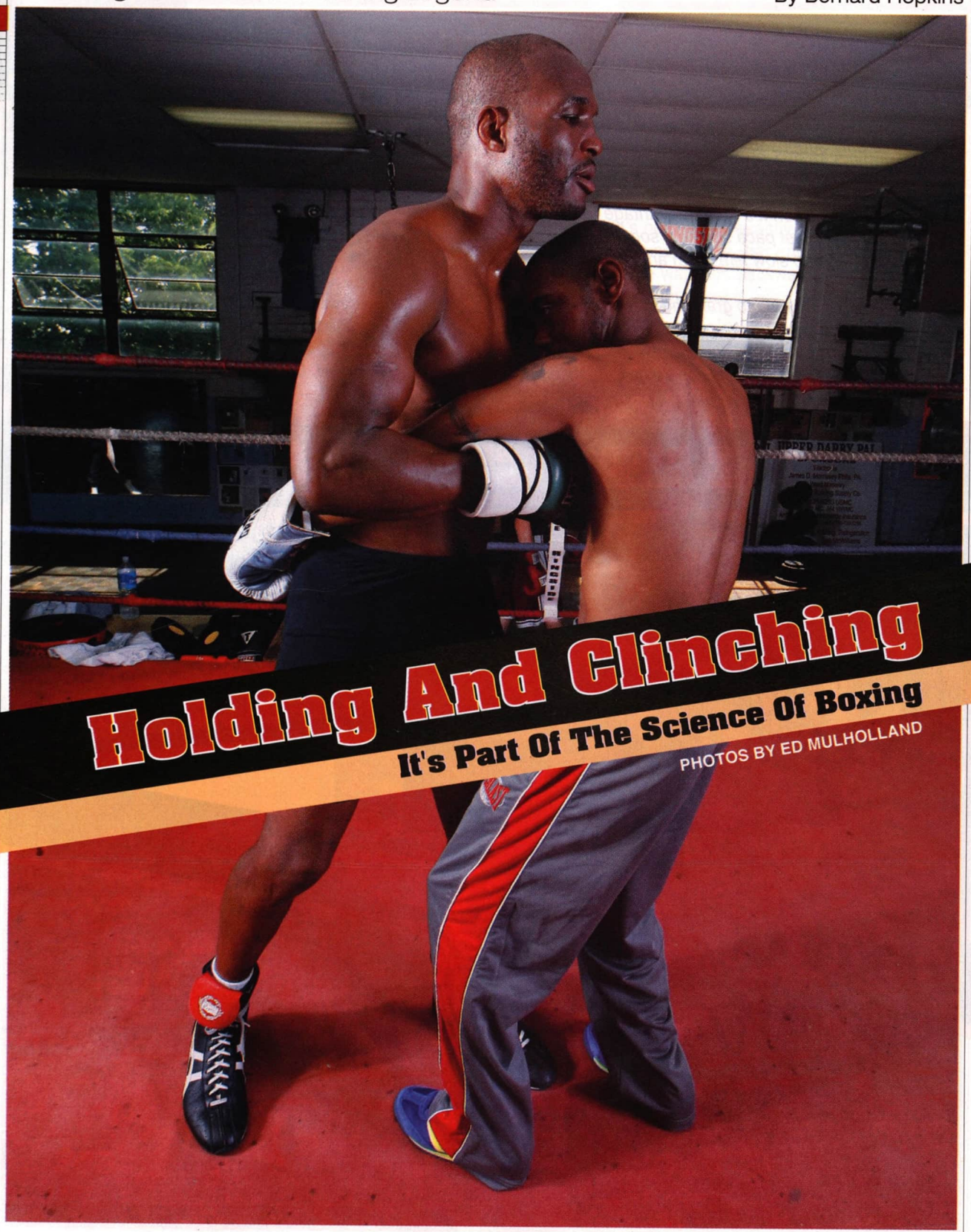
[Perfect Execution]

Boxing Lessons From A Living Legend

By Bernard Hopkins



Holding And Clinching

It's Part Of The Science Of Boxing

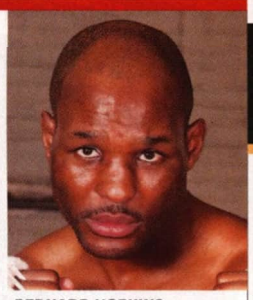
PHOTOS BY ED MULHOLLAND

Fans don't like to see a lot of holding and clinching in the ring because it slows down the action, but it's part of the game. A good fighter has to know how and when to do it. Not just because doing it the wrong way can get you knocked out, but because not doing it when you should also can get you knocked out. Like anything else in boxing, it's a strategic maneuver.

Some writers get on my case for holding or clinching. Technically, they're right. By the rules, a referee is only supposed to let you clinch when you've been hurt and the only way you can stay up is by grabbing the other guy. That's the way it's enforced in the amateurs. But that's never why I hold. In the pros, you can get away with a lot more—it's a whole different game.

I hold or clinch when it's to my advantage to do it. When I fought Joe Calzaghe, I knew he wanted to fight at a fast pace so I held sometimes to slow him down. When I fought Kelly Pavlik, I knew I didn't have to slow him down and hold him, that my movement and jab would do the job. And they did.

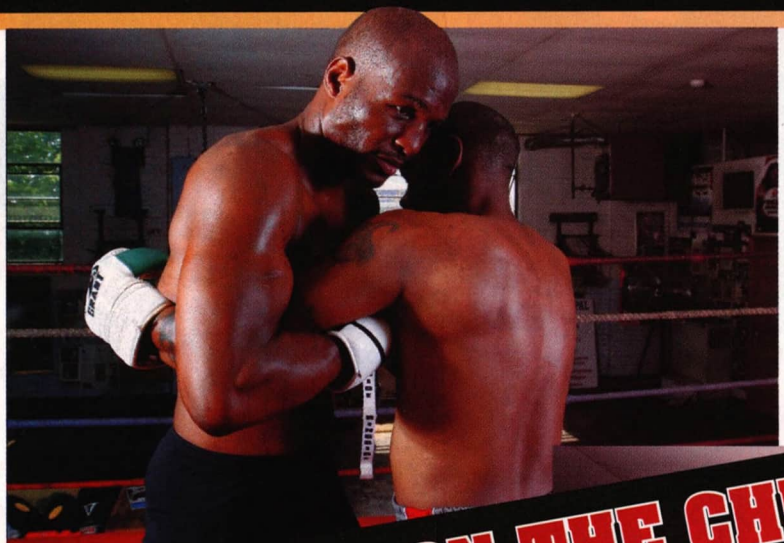
There are right reasons to grab and there's a wrong one. The wrong one is because you don't know what else to do. If you're grabbing just to grab, you're in trouble. Everything you do in the ring should be for a reason. You have to know when to do it and how to do it. It also helps to know how to defend against a clinch, to get out of it or prevent it when you want to. Danny Davis and me cover that here too.



BERNARD HOPKINS
Is the former middleweight and light heavyweight champion of the world.

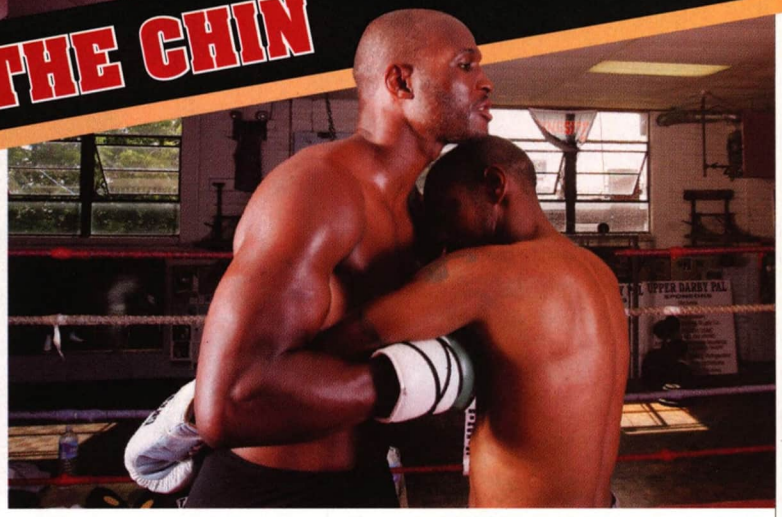
(All photos taken at Andy Carr's Gym in Upper Darby, PA)

GET CLOSE AND LOCK UP THOSE ARMS



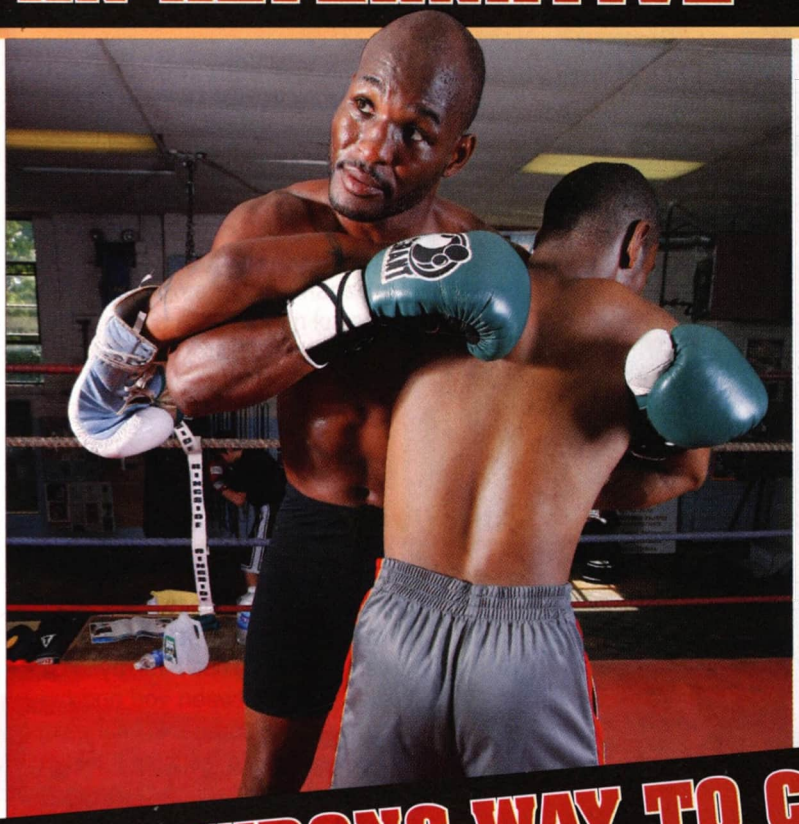
DON'T HUG HIM. You've got to get in there tight and get your gloves up around his arms and hold on. Lock 'em up. And see where my head is? Over Danny's left shoulder, not by his head. You want to keep your head to the side when you're clinching so you don't catch a headbutt.

TAKING IT ON THE CHIN



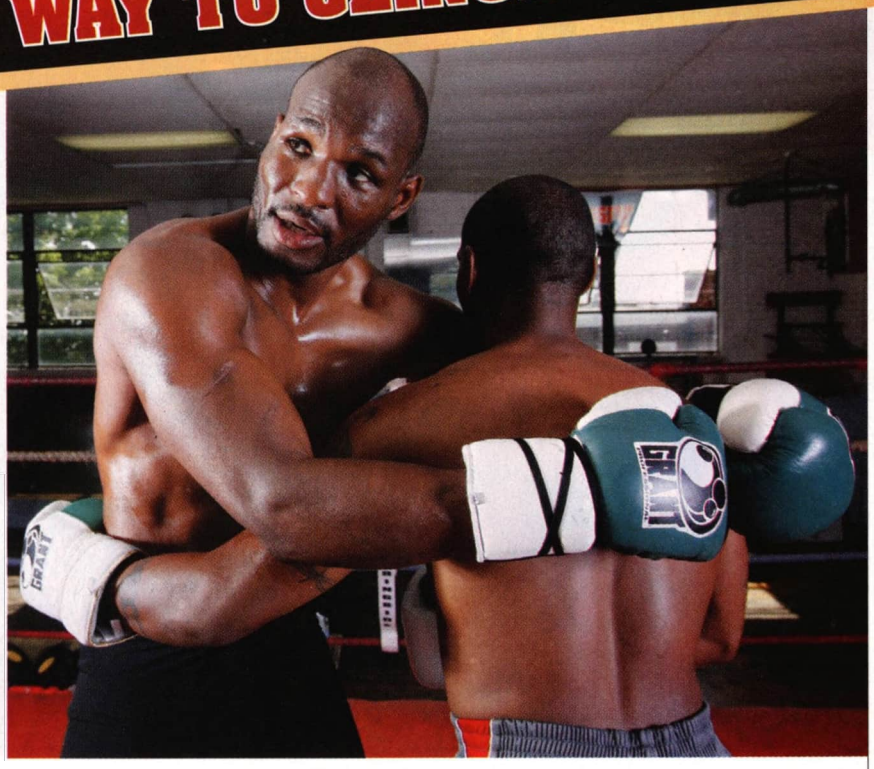
HERE'S WHAT CAN HAPPEN IF YOU DON'T GET YOUR HEAD TO THE SIDE. He jumps up and down a little while you're holding him or brings that head up, and bam! Never give up your head.

AN ALTERNATIVE



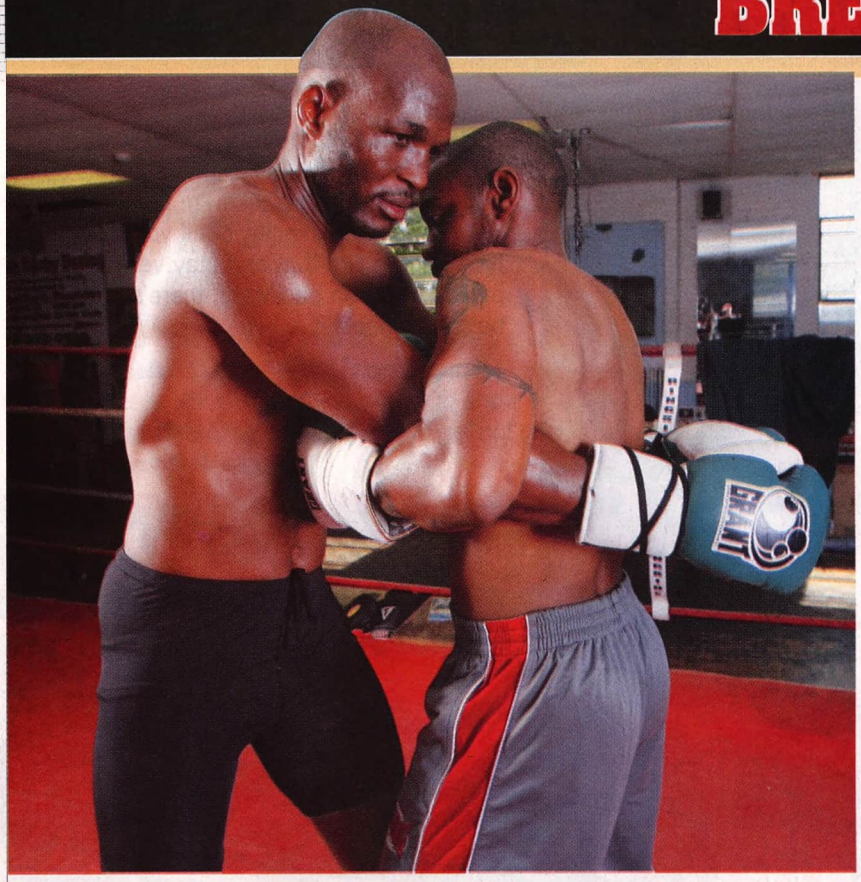
IF FOR SOME REASON YOU'RE HAVING TROUBLE LOCKING UP HIS ARMS, get your arms up under his and lift up, like I'm doing here. He's not tied up exactly, but if you can get his arms up like that and stay very close, maybe walk him backward, there's nothing he can do about it

THE WRONG WAY TO CLINCH

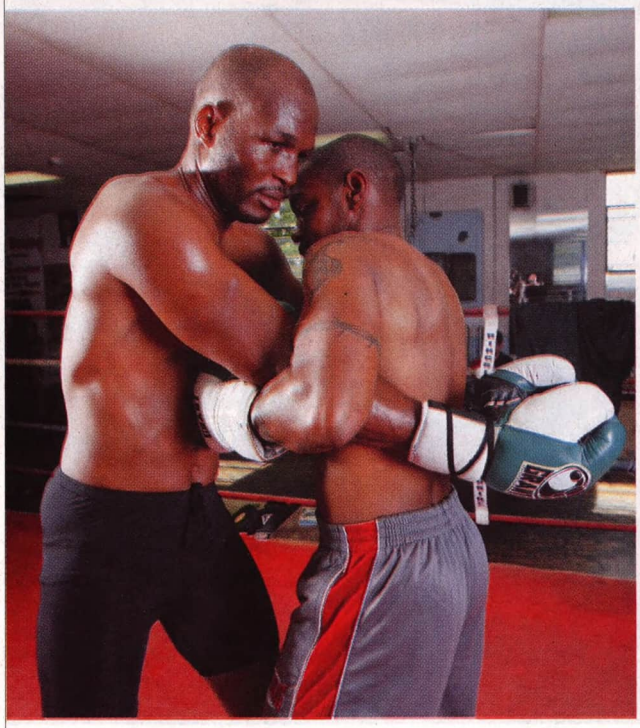


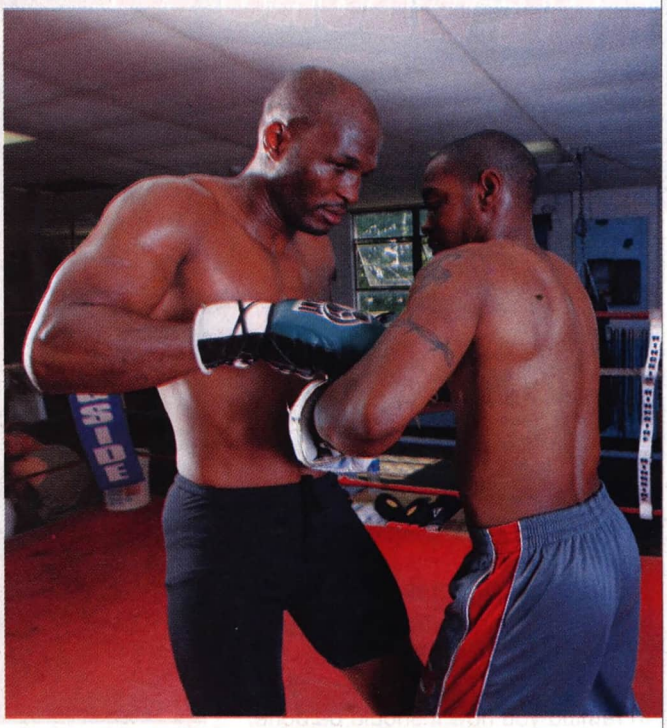
IT'S CALLED CLINCHING, NOT HUGGING, and the first time you try to hold like this, your opponent should push you off or slip out and hit you with a right hand to remind you how it should be done.

BREAKING OUT



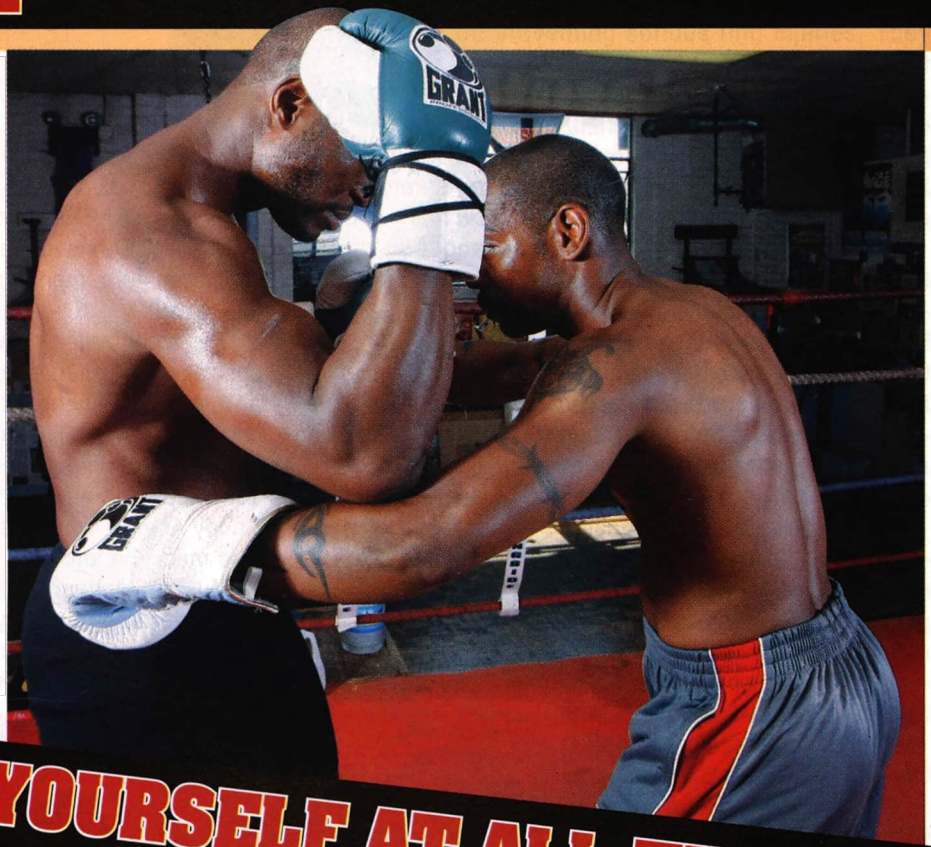
IT'S GOING TO HAPPEN SOONER OR LATER that your opponent wants to hold and you don't want him to. These three photos show you how to slip out. First, try to create a little room between you and him. Next, turn your gloves so that your palms face up. Then, take a fast step back and jerk your arms back hard. If you get loose you're in a good position to punch.



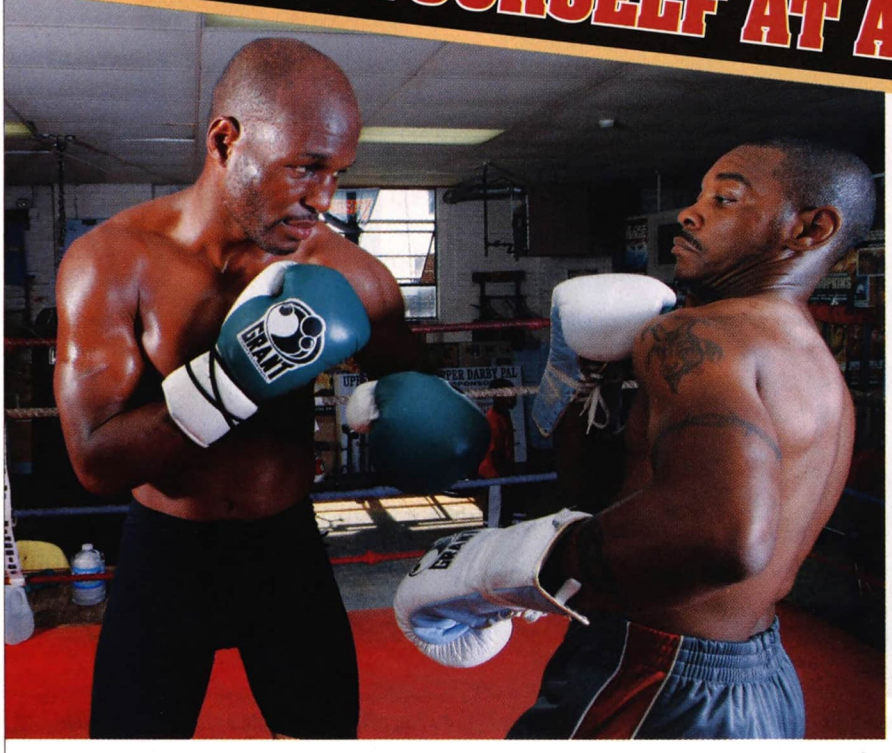


THE CHOP

WHEN YOU HURT YOUR MAN HE'S GOING TO WANT TO GRAB AND HOLD. He can only do it if you let him. Don't let him. When he tries to wrap you up, bring down your elbow hard on his arm so he can't get it around you. It's called The Chop and it keeps your hands free to punch and lets him know who's boss.



PROTECT YOURSELF AT ALL TIMES



NEVER, NEVER, NEVER RELAX when you break from a clinch! That's a good way to get knocked out. Either back up with your hands up and chin down, or go right after your man the way I am here and let him worry about defense.

By Margaret Goodman, M.D.

An Underutilized Tool

As a relentless advocate for boxing safety regulations, it continues to amaze me how many commissions refrain from enacting changes to protect fighters. The solutions are not farfetched or expensive. One key is the American Association of Professional Ring Physicians (AAPRP).

On October 16, the AAPRP held its annual convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. The brainchild of Connecticut physician Dr. Michael Schwartz, the organization hosted ring physicians, researchers, commissioners, fighters, and trainers to discuss issues ranging from medical dilemmas, drug usage and testing, to perspectives on safety and preventing ring deaths.

In 1997, Foxwoods Resort hosted the rematch of Roy Jones versus Montell Griffin. With no specific requirement as to when medical records had to be submitted, Schwartz found himself missing over half of the test results the night before the card. He was able to salvage the event by calling as far away as Australia in the middle of the night for records. Discussing the recurrent offense with commissioners, one told Schwartz it was the fault of the doctors, but if they could band together, they could fix the problem. It was that night the AAPRP was born.

The AAPRP now has more than 200 members and acts as the medical arm of the Association of Boxing Commissions. In addition to the convention, they have a ring physician certification program, chaired by New Jersey's Dr. Dominic Coletta, and a fighter assistance program that delivers discounted or free health care to boxers and their families who don't have health insurance or the means to pay.

"Fighters come to my office, and I always have an open door," said Schwartz. "I even arranged for discounted radiological centers. We put it out there to the AAPRP membership to do physicals and help these kids. We have made this public, but still most trainers, promoters, managers, and fighters do not recognize the benefit."

The organization's review board is comprised of various specialties experienced in boxing medicine to review cases and render opinions. This is extremely useful to smaller commissions with little medical staff.

This year's meeting included a panel of trainers, Thell Torrence, Eddie Mustafa Muhammad, Jesse Reid, and Kenny Adams, who discussed their perspectives on ringside medicine and how to improve safety.

Mustafa Muhammad, a former WBA light heavyweight titleholder and currently the trainer of Chad Dawson, is now president of the Joint Association of Boxers (JAB), an affiliate of the Teamster's Union, which is comprised of

Dr. Schwartz is flanked by female fighters Elena Reid (left) and Mia St. John at AAPRP Convention

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Delvin Rodriguez spoke about his fight with Oscar Diaz

more than 2,000 fighters. One of their main goals is to get fighters health benefits.

Although outspoken at the AAPRP meeting regarding monitoring the gyms, where most serious injuries occur, Mustafa Muhammad admits to be "realistically pessimistic" in accomplishing needed changes.

"We have been over this a million times," he said. "Commissions are content in making money on taxes. They don't hire boxing people; they are not doing their job. This will never be rectified unless there are trained, commission-approved monitors. If a kid is kayoed in the gym, he can't fight, and he must take a complete physical before fighting again."

Still, when the physician attendees asked the trainer panel if they would come forward to tell a commission about a fighter injured in training, there was a resounding consensus, especially from Mustafa Muhammad, who bellowed: "I ain't no rat!"

To be fair, the trainers agreed that if it was their own fighter who was hurt, they would take action, but it was beyond their responsibility to disclose anyone else's.

The fighter panel included Chris Byrd, Ken Norton, Kevin Kelley, Steve Cunningham, and Delvin Rodriguez. All reiterated the dangers of gym wars, but agreed that there was too much variability in ring physicians' prefight evaluations to really discover problems.

Byrd noted: "We, as fighters, know who is thorough and who is not."

Due to lack of uniformity in physician training, things are missed, and potentially dangerously injured fighters are allowed to compete, often at their own peril.

Promoter Joe DeGuardia, manager Stan Hoffman, and Rodriguez highlighted a panel on preventing serious ring injuries. They detailed Rodriguez' fight on July 16 that ended with Oscar Diaz' near-death collapse in Texas. Attending physician Dr. Wayne Lee discussed Texas' protocol, which expedited Diaz' transport. I outlined uniform medical protocols for all ringside and dressing room safety situations.

Neurosurgeon Robert Cantu, medical director of the National Center for Catastrophic Sports Injury Research in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, a registry collecting and analyzing data on athletic spine and head injuries, spoke to the group on brain hemorrhages and male hormone deficiencies as a result of head trauma that have been seen in the National Football League.

Cantu complemented the AAPRP's advancing quality of scientific presentations and the collegiality in uniting all factions of boxing community. Although there are members from around the globe, he noted, "Today, boxing is bigger outside of the United States. I would like to see better international requirements and physician representation."

Maryland's commission attorney, Bruce Spizler, served on the National Association of Attorneys General Task Force on Boxing from 1998 through 2000. At the AAPRP meeting, he spoke about the natural symbiotic relationship between commissions and ring physicians: "Boxing commissions and ring physicians should work together as effective regulators," said Spizler.

"I would love to see standardization of medical forms," agreed Schwartz. "I would also like to see a panel of approved physicians across the country who understand what medical issues commissions are looking for that might be of significance. Those doctors would have to send those reports to a central data bank. Doctors would be able to see the actual MRI or EKG with secured access via user name and password. This would be confidential and save the fighters time and money."

Schwartz, who also works with the Florida Marlins, said that, "Baseball is so together in comparison to boxing. Boxing is a family, but a dysfunctional one."

The AAPRP has proven that boxing safety is not insurmountable, but it will take a cohesive approach from "relatives" who often disagree but realize they cannot accomplish the task at hand alone.

For more information on the medical assistance program for fighters and their families, please contact the AAPRP at: ringsidemd@aol.com ■

By Jim Bagg

Predicting Problems

Just because a guy goes around calling himself the world's greatest boxing columnist, that doesn't mean he's necessarily the world's greatest boxing prognosticator.

Somewhere along the line, it became a requirement of all sports journalists that we tell our audiences what's going to happen, as if we'd signed up to be weathermen, not sportswriters. And the Baggtastic is in a strangely humble enough mood to admit that he's not all that good at being a boxing weatherman.

Thankfully, we don't have to be that good at it. ESPN's jiggle-jowled blabbermouth Chris Berman hardly ever gets any of his football picks right, yet he continues to call himself "The Swami" and nobody makes a stink. Apparently, the public likes to see their sports journalists make predictions, but they end up not caring much about whether those predictions are any good.

In the December 2008 issue of THE RING, the Baggarooney made a prediction that couldn't have been more wrong. And he could have easily let this error in judgment slide, and chances are nobody would have called him on it. But, hey, shouldn't we all be able to mock ourselves from time to time? (Especially those of us who feel secure in our ability to write rings around every other wannabe on the boxing beat.) So the Baggmeister is calling himself on this atrociously wrong comment that ran two issues ago, right after Vic Darchinyan vs. Cristian Mijares was announced:

"Mijares-Darchinyan is a decent clash of styles, but is there anyone who doesn't expect the Mexican to box 'The Raging Bull' into a knot? Mijares is ridiculously slick and a top-10 pound-for-pounder; Darchinyan is a tough guy with a big punch who got embarrassed by Nonito Donaire the last time he fought someone half as skillful as Mijares."

If you saw Darchinyan-Mijares, you know those comments were as off-base as the search for weapons of mass destruction. The only knots in the ring at The Home Depot

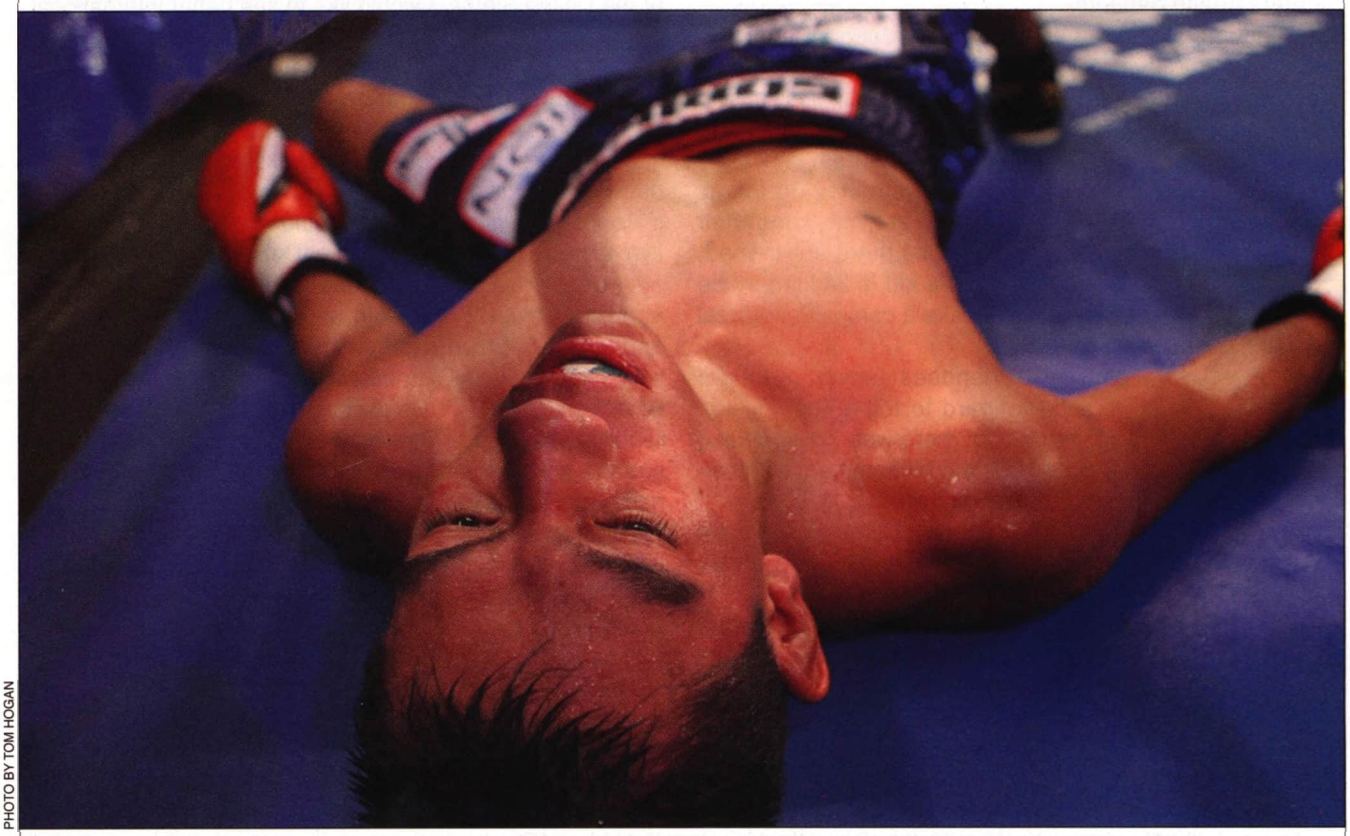


PHOTO BY TOM HOGAN

Bagg's prediction fell flatter than Mijares

PHOTO BY AL BELLO/GETTY IMAGES

Mosley upsets De La Hoya and Baggman

Center were the ones Darchinyan was creating on Mijares' face. The Bagglestiltskin expected a shutout win for Mijares, and instead watched a one-sided knockout win for the angry Armenian.

But, hey, it's not the first time the Baggman has been dead wrong, and it won't be the last. (Unless yours truly croaks tomorrow, which is always a possibility.) So here's a trip down embarrassing-memory lane, going in reverse chronological order, of my all-time seven worst predictions. We'll start with a couple of whiffs that made it into print, and then continue with a few of President Obagga's prognosticating blunders that have never been made public until now.

1. From the Winter 2006 issue of *World Boxing*, the original home of "Hitting On The Break": "If and when Carlos Baldomir defends the welterweight title against Floyd Mayweather, put some dough on Baldomir."

By "dough," clearly the Baggadactyl meant cookie dough; nobody would ever be crazy enough to recommend putting actual money on Baldomir against Mayweather, right?

2. From the Summer 2000 issue of *World Boxing*: "Oscar De La Hoya is only about a 7-5 favorite in most books to beat Shane Mosley. In my mind, he's about a 5-1 favorite. Take my advice, oh sheep of mine, and bet the house on 'The Golden Boy.'"

Needless to say, the lesson here is when the Baggmaster specifically suggests placing a bet, run the other way as fast as you can. It's a good thing the Baggsketball is always too strapped for cash to actually make any bets himself.

3. Here's a prediction that ex-wife number three can attest to, because it was made loudly and proudly during the one week when we were actually happy together: From the moment Evander Holyfield barely got past Michael Dokes in 1989, the Baggstronomical declared that "The Real Deal" would never amount to anything as a heavyweight, that he'd get dusted by Mike Tyson if they ever fought, and that he'd wish he'd never left cruiserweight.

That prediction went about as well as my divorce settlement with that ex-wife.

4. Want a good laugh? Here's an actual quote from a letter the Baggapalooza sent in to *Sports Illustrated* (did you know they used to cover boxing?) in 1980: "Anyone who thinks the great Muhammad Ali is going to lose to a mediocrity like Larry Holmes needs to get a lobotomy and rebuild from scratch."

In the Baggodex's defense, he's pretty sure he'd just polished off a half-bottle of whiskey before sitting down to write that letter. And then he drank the flammable substance he'd used to polish the bottle.

5. Long before the Baggberry became blindly loyal to Ali, he was dead wrong about "The Greatest" in the other direction, hence the prediction shared with friends at the time (yes, as a younger man, the Baggoneer used to have friends) that Sonny Liston would dust this upstart Cassius Clay inside of 60 seconds. In other words, the Baggity-Bagg-Bagg couldn't tell there was a difference in talent between Floyd Patterson and the most famous athlete of the 20th century.

But hey, it was the '60s. The Baggamaniac won't blame that one on booze, but he will blame it on everything else we were doing in the '60s.

6. When Rocky Marciano announced his retirement as the undefeated heavyweight champion of the world, Dr. Baggenstein, though fairly young, was already jaded enough to guarantee that "The Rock" would be back. And he was

Marciano never fought again after knocking out Moore

stupid enough to guarantee it in the form of betting half his baseball card collection that Marciano would have a fight scheduled within six months.

Anyone know what that Mickey Mantle rookie card the Baggravator gave up is worth? Can't be too much, right?

7. The Baggaroo has never revealed exactly how old he really is, but this will give you a hint: When asked for a prediction on the record, he had the Confederacy whipping the Union in a landslide.

What can the Baggalini say? He underestimated Grant, labeling him one-dimensional, and he mistakenly thought Lee was the goods.

PHOTO BY ANDREAS RENTZ/GETTY IMAGES

Vitali demonstrates his alternative fist strengthener

Urine Good Hands

Vitali Klitschko will probably get credit for the Comeback of the Year when THE RING puts together its annual year-end awards, but there's no "probably" about it when it comes to the way he's locked up top honors for the Bizarre Boxing Quote of the Year. We learned recently that "Dr. Iron Fist" keeps those iron fists from swelling after fights by wrapping his hands in diapers soaked with the urine of this three-year-old son, Max, and the heavyweight was happy to illuminate us all on the specifics.

"Children's urine is pure, without toxic substances, and hardly smells," Klitschko explained. "Little Max must make pee-pee for Dad."

It gets better:

"Some people even drink their own urine. However, I don't."

And, best of all, a little tinkle trash talk:

"I also recommend the urine compress for Sam Peter. He could wind it around his head."

To think, after Vitali quit against Chris Byrd, we all thought he was yellow. It turns out it's only his hands that are.

Rhetorical Questions

Have you ever longed for the Mayweather clan more than when you watched episodes of the staggeringly uneventful *Calzaghe-Jones 24/7*?

Speaking of Roy Jones, for a guy with such a legendary ego, isn't it surprising how quickly he got comfortable with losing? Didn't you expect a little more effort to win against Joe Calzaghe, rather than just enough effort to create the illusion that he was trying to win?

Was anyone else as shocked as the Baggbrero to learn that Yory Boy Campas quit on his stool against Saul Roman in November? Isn't that so unlike Yory Boy?

Is it just the Baggenbrau, or does it seem like there's another Judah brother turning pro every month? And isn't it sad how little being a Judah means at this point in terms of giving a young fighter a career push?

Is anyone else expecting their Spanish comprehension skills to plummet now that Telefutura's *Solo Boxeo* has been cancelled?

PHOTO BY CHINA PHOTOS/GETTY IMAGES

Barrera launches ill-advised comeback against Samuel Ventura

The Monthly Mailbagg

Ask and ye shall receive. Or even a blind squirrel occasionally finds a nut. The Baggadoodledoo isn't sure which cliché applies here, but after the Mailbagg in the December '08 issue begged and pleaded for an original comment and/or a compelling question, one of the readers actually delivered. Enjoy:

Hey JB,

I ask you to shed any presumption of journalistic objectivity and tell me which of the current fighters you find yourself rooting against each time they step into the ring. Every fan has a few. The top of my list includes Antonio Tarver (too loud and arrogant), Oscar De La Hoya (too pretty and pampered by the media), and Wladimir Klitschko (too boring and soft-chinned for a fighter big enough to eat most of his opposition).

Now it's your turn.

Poke fun at my question, refer to yourself in third-person quips reminiscent of Rob Schneider circa 1990, and tell us which of today's boxers you most want to see on the short end of a 10-count or a shutout scorecard.

Thank you for your time,

Charles Crosbie
Ogden, Utah

Hey CC,

Who knew there was intelligent life in Utah? Your question is a breath of fresh air wafting through my stale apartment, so the Baggnocchio will get straight to his answers regarding the guys he roots against:

John Ruiz (no explanation necessary).

Kevin Johnson (makes Tarver seem introverted by comparison, plus Tarver had the skills to back up some of his braggadocio).

Paulie Malignaggi (started growing on the Baggermilk with his gutsy effort against Miguel Cotto, but the hair extension crap undid that goodwill in a hurry).

Michael Katsidis (nothing against Katsidis really, who's a limited but entertaining fighter; the Baggbuster is rooting against him going forward because his trainer, Brendon Smith, is about as charming as a cavity search).

And Mr. Baggjangles used to root against Roy Jones, but the novelty of seeing him get beaten up has worn off at this point.

By the way, the Baggarama has known Rob Schneider personally for many years. Where do you think Schneider derived the inspiration for the "making copies" character?

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Baggarama is no fan of Johnson's

Is there any possible way the Marco Antonio Barrera comeback doesn't end badly?

How long will it be until the WBC starts trying to collect fees from writers for using the letters "WBC" in their articles? And how quickly will those writers come to understand the value in THE RING championship policy when that happens?

And The Stingray Goes To ...

Manny Perez, who pulled off a Stingray rarity: winning the award without winning a fight. In October, the tough Denver junior lightweight brought his not-so-intimidating 12-4 (2) record into a fight he was supposed to lose, and lose comfortably, against 18-0 (12) prospect Brandon "Bam Bam" Rios, and Perez scrapped his way to a hard-earned draw. One judge had Perez winning 96-94, while the other two both had it 95-95, denying Perez what would have been by far the biggest victory of his career.

It was the classic formula for a Stingray: The undefeated kid who really hasn't faced anyone any good yet, taking on the opponent who usually loses these fights but always gives a solid effort and never gets knocked out. In the end, it wasn't quite the classic Stingray because the guy who was supposed to lose didn't win. But the guy who was supposed to win didn't win either. So that's at least a moral victory for underdogs everywhere.

And that's good enough for the Baggerooski to raise your arm, Manny. ■

Jim Bagg can be reached at Baggmeister@yahoo.com.

[Come Out Writing]

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, THE RING, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034.

Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

Monkey Business In Montreal

It was as predictable as a cheesy, late-night sitcom—a suspicious referee and a disgraceful sanctioning body denied victory to a deserving prizefighter. Yes, I'm talking about that heist up in Montreal, where there was more home cooking on display than at a family reunion. Lucien Bute, together with the "IBF(elonious)" and a two-legged disgrace named Marlon B. Wright teamed up to ensure that Bute's silly trinket remained around his waist.

The end of the 12th round had me in full outrage, as this clown in referee's clothing monitored Librado Andrade's alleged inability to stay in a neutral corner. The clueless referee incredibly began blaring to Andrade to "stay in the corner," multiple times, thereby giving the hometown knockout victim ample time to uplift himself and retain his title.

Wright and the IBF should be tried for boxing treason and run out of the sport for good. Boxing fans are sick of watching their ilk destroy the sport from the inside out.

Mr. Andrade, take solace in knowing that fans who witnessed what went on north of our border share in your pain. You went into hostile territory, fought your heart out, and were denied an unbelievable last-second victory. Try not to let the idiots running the sport destroy your spirit.

CRAIG M. WICK
Waukegan, IL

Props For B-Hop

The two recent fights involving veterans Shane Mosley and Bernard Hopkins emphatically illustrated the importance of intelligent boxing and choosing your fights to shine. The record book will show that Sugar Shane registered a kayo of Ricardo Mayorga, while B-Hop won by a unanimous decision over Kelly Pavlik. However, true boxing fans will agree that Hopkins' triumph was significantly more impressive. Sure, some may bicker about the dullness of some of B-Hop's fights, but they are more than compensated by Hopkins' periodic brilliance performances (Pavlik, Tarver, De La Hoya, Trinidad) that remind

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Bernard Hopkins' one-sided victory over Kelly Pavlik surprised a lot of people, but not reader Brian Han, who believes that B-Hop's brilliant performances more than compensate for his boring ones.

purists what the Sweet Science is all about.

I believe the time has come for experts and fans to give Hopkins the credit that he deserves not only for his skills, but also for his longevity at the highest level.

BRIAN HAN
Sydney, Australia

Boxing Billboards

Is boxing turning into NASCAR? Boxers' trunks today advertise everything. They look like a small-town newspaper's classifieds section. Bring back the old days, when one boxer wore white and one wore black.

SAUL DOUGLAS
Ardmore, OK

A Possible Solution

After reading the article "Klitschko vs. Klitschko: The Biggest Heavyweight Fight That Will Never Happen" in the November 2008 issue, I realized that the division could be without a true world champion for the foreseeable future. As Vitali is currently ranked number two and will not fight his brother, would THE RING recognize the winner of a fight between Wladimir and Ruslan Chagaev (or whoever is rated number three at the time) as the heavyweight champion?

JUDE FARRELLY
San Francisco, CA

Editor's note: THE RING would seriously consider recognizing a bout between the number-one and number-three contenders as filling the vacancy under the circumstances you describe.

Not So Super Joe

Some boxing fans and experts alike are pushing things to the laughable limit by saying Joe Calzaghe might be one of the 10 greatest fighters ever if he chooses to retire. That's just plain nonsense. I thought Bernard Hopkins-Calzaghe was a draw, and if Calzaghe is that great, why did he have to suffer first-round knockdowns at the hands of both faded legends Hopkins and Roy Jones? Calzaghe should retire because not only would undefeated Chad Dawson defeat "The Pride Of Wales," Glen Johnson just might do the same.

STEPHEN DONATELLI
Pittsburgh, PA

Juan Manuel & Manny

How come Juan Manuel Marquez is your lightweight champion while Manny Pacquiao is your best pound-for-pound boxer? Marquez cannot beat Pac-Man and yet he is THE RING champion. Weird!

JEROME EMILIANI RUBIANO
Bataan, Philippines

Editor's note: Pacquiao drew with Marquez at featherweight and beat him at junior lightweight. They never fought each other at lightweight, the division in which Marquez became world champion by knocking out Joel Casamayor, the reigning 135-pound champion going in. Pacquiao's position ahead of Marquez in the pound-for-pound ratings is based on the fact he owns a decision victory over Juan Manuel.

Barbershop Boxing

I read the "Oscar vs. Pac-Man Superfight" issue and it was great. But one thing stood out: Jeff Ryan's "Ryan Out Loud" column, where he made the comment about the lack of boxing talk in barbershops. I go to a barbershop here in Charlotte every two weeks and we talk boxing all the time. We even order and watch several HBO pay-per-views every year. Max Kellerman is right about boxing and barber shops. Maybe Mr. Ryan should go to a shop frequented more by "the brothers." Great issue otherwise.

DAVID HOUSTON
Charlotte, NC

Hatton And The Hall

I have been a RING reader for years and feel compelled to write for the first time. There is no way "Hold 'em And Hit 'em Hatton" is a sure-shot Hall of Famer ("Special Analysis: Which Of Today's Fighters Are Headed To The Hall?", November 2008). When you look at who he's beaten, his only credible win over a big name is Kostya Tszyu. A great win indeed, but one victory does not automatically punch your ticket to the Hall. William Dettloff argues that from a financial standpoint it's better to be wildly popular then wildly good. I recall Arturo Gatti being wildly popular, but all the blood, sweat, and tears he put into his career doesn't get him a sure-shot.

My hats off to you guys for the job you do every month and an excellent job compiling the rest of the Hall of Fame list, but there is absolutely no way Ricky Hatton is a sure-shot Hall of Famer. Probable at best!

FABIAN BETANCOURT
gorams_29@yahoo.com ■

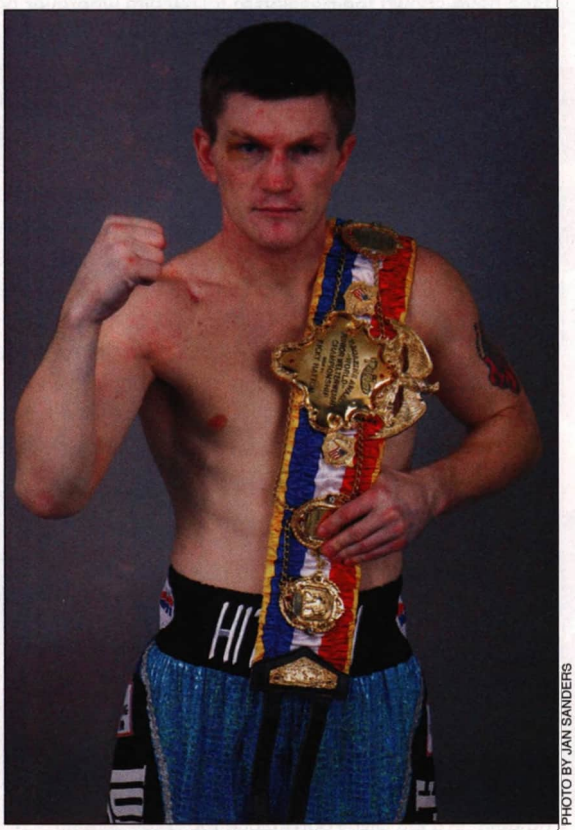


PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

Is Ricky Hatton a sure-shot, first-ballot Hall of Famer? Some say yes; others, such as reader Fabian Betancourt, say no way. We will, of course, have to wait until five years after Hatton's final fight to see who is correct.

[Looking Ahead]

By Eric Raskin

The Comebacking Homecoming King

It's funny how quickly a mandatory mismatch can turn into a fight that makes perfect sense. Prior to world middleweight champion **Kelly Pavlik**'s undressing at the hands of **Bernard Hopkins**, the WBC's insistence that he fight fringe contender **Marco Antonio Rubio** was viewed as a sick joke. But defeat has transformed Pavlik from the undisputed future of American boxing into a fighter with plenty to prove once again, and a comeback fight against Rubio, though still probably a mismatch, is a logical next step.

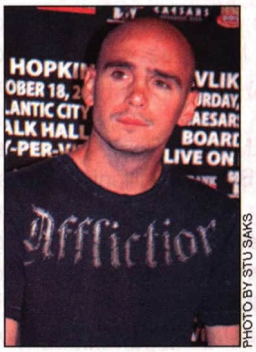


PHOTO BY STU SAKS

It's manadatory that Kelly Pavlik have a gimme

And adding to the sound logic is the plan to do it at the Chevy Center in Youngstown, Ohio. "The Ghost's" hometown fans have shown the passion to follow him wherever he goes, and this time he's bringing the fight to them.

"My fans went to Atlantic City, they went to Vegas, they showed their support," Pavlik told THE RING. "So it's kind of a little payback for them. And the tickets ain't gonna be a crazy amount of money. It's awesome to be doing this, it's really exciting for me."

The fight will take place on February 21. The television outlet remained uncertain as of press time, but the most likely option was for promoter Top Rank to put it on pay-per-view, in conjunction with a **Miguel Cotto** fight from Puerto Rico.

Pavlik has seen plenty of Rubio; the 6'1½" Mexican defeated **Enrique Ornelas** in a close bout on the Hopkins-Pavlik undercard, plus Pavlik sparred with **Kofi Jantuah** when the African was preparing for what would be a first-round blastout of Rubio in 2004. Pavlik is confident, but he isn't taking Rubio lightly.

"He has a good amount of flaws, but he does have good pop and he's experienced," Pavlik said. "So he's definitely a dangerous fighter. When the other guy can hit pretty good and he's got a lot of experience, you have to be careful. And his hand speed's not bad at all, he's got good hand speed. But his big flaw is that he gets hit a lot. Still, I don't place too much weight on his loss to Kofi. Anytime in the first round when you have a knockout like that, that's usually just bad timing and bad luck. I can't really learn anything from that fight. But I've seen a lot of his other fights, and I know what to expect."

PHOTO BY CHRIS COZZONE/FIGHTWIRE IMAGES

Darchinyan could have a tough matchup with Arce

The question is, what exactly can we expect from Pavlik? A first defeat can affect a young fighter's psyche. So will we see the same dynamic banger that the boxing world was falling in love with through his first 34 fights?

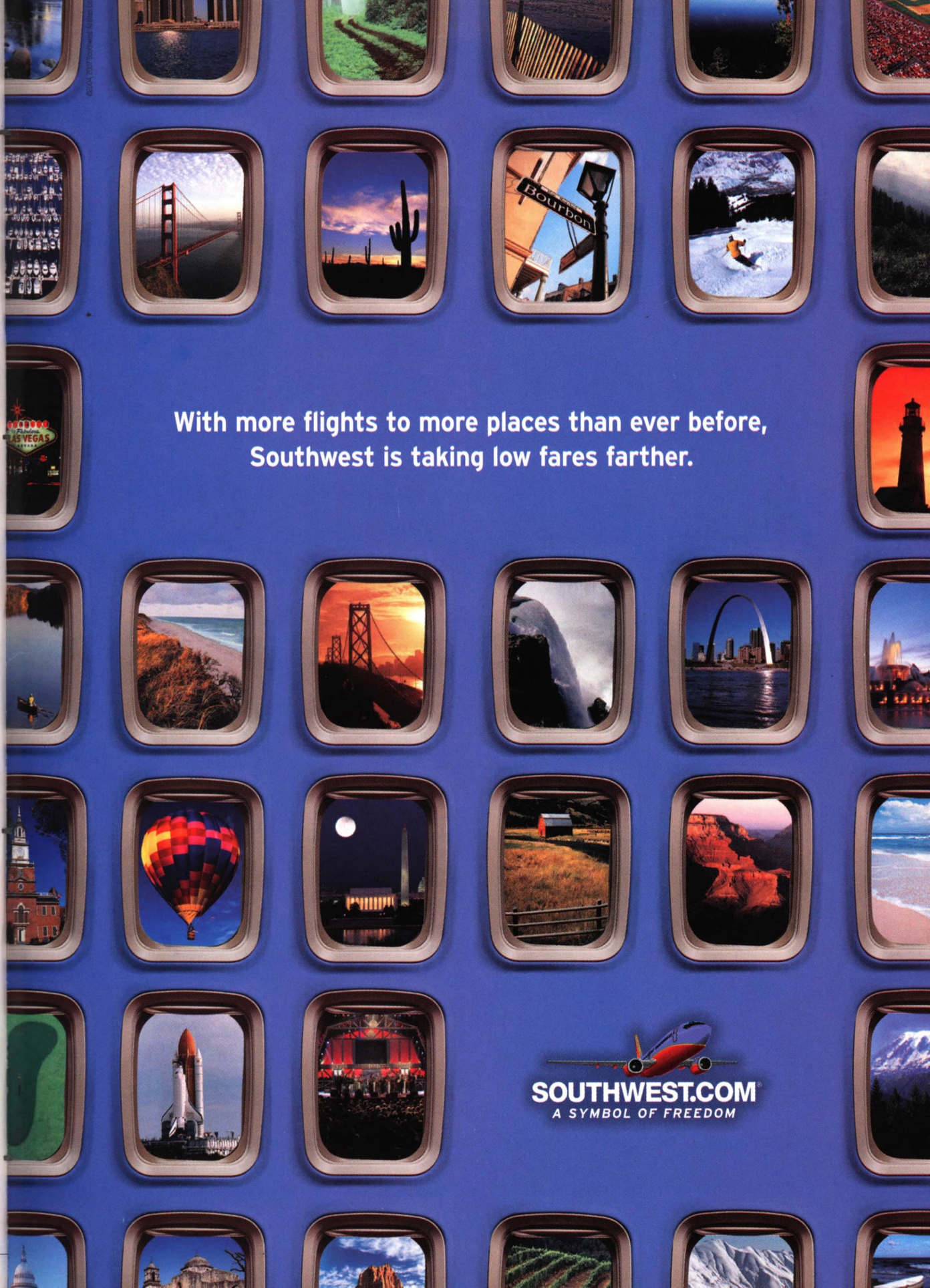
From listening to him talk, it doesn't seem Pavlik's mental outlook has been shaken.

"Not making no excuses," he said, "but that just wasn't me that night against Hopkins. It was just one of those nights where I thought I would loosen up, I thought I would warm up, but after about the fourth round, I realized I just didn't have it. I just couldn't get my body going. Hopkins would do things, and I knew he was going to do them a split-second before he did, and it was just that I couldn't react. If I was in there and I felt great and I got beat like that, then I would go, 'Hey, I gotta go back to the drawing board, start over.' But this was just one of those nights.

"But if people are doubting me now, that just motivates me to go back and prove to people, show everybody that that wasn't Kelly Pavlik that night. I want to look good against Rubio. I want to make a statement: *This* is Kelly Pavlik."

Listen Up

In the wake of **Vic Darchinyan**'s dominant win over **Cristian Mijares** to become the number-one fighter at junior bantamweight, the two tiny talents are heading in different directions. Darchinyan is probably looking at a February 7 slugfest against **Jorge Arce** in Anaheim, California, with Showtime televising. Meanwhile, Mijares is seriously considering a move up to bantamweight, where he might meet titlist **Anselmo Moreno** in a battle of skilled southpaws. That fight would take place in Mexico, possibly as early as February, and would be televised as a smaller-scale pay-per-view ... The January 9, 2009, season premiere of ESPN2's *Friday Night Fights* will feature a pair of 2004 Cuban Olympic gold medalists, featherweight **Yuriorkis Gamboa** and heavyweight **Odlanier Solis**. The card will take place in Primm, Nevada, and will be Solis' U.S. debut ... Other *FNF* bouts scheduled as of press time include **Carlos Quintana** vs. **Eromosele Albert** on January 16 and **Herman Ngoudjo** vs. **Juan Urango** on January 30. ■



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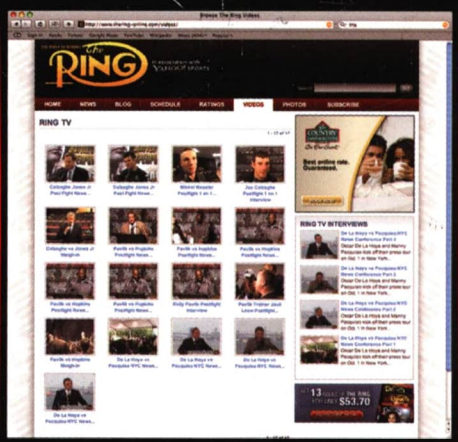

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